HUMBERTO RAMOS BRIAN AUGUSTYN SANDRA HOPE

CALIFORNIA OUT THERE™

VOLUME 3

REUNION

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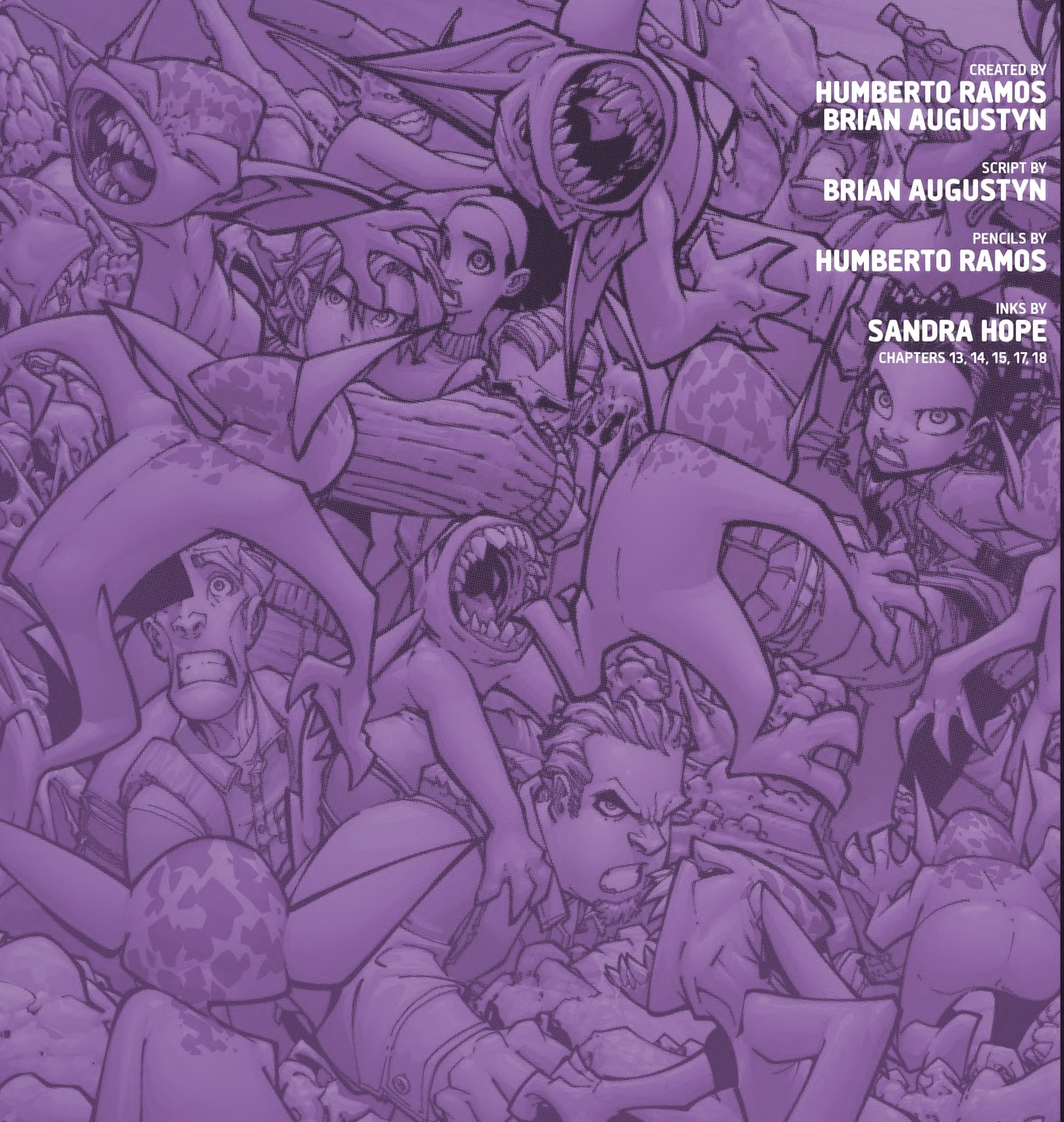
HUMBERTO RAMOS
BRIAN AUGUSTYN
SANDRA HOPE



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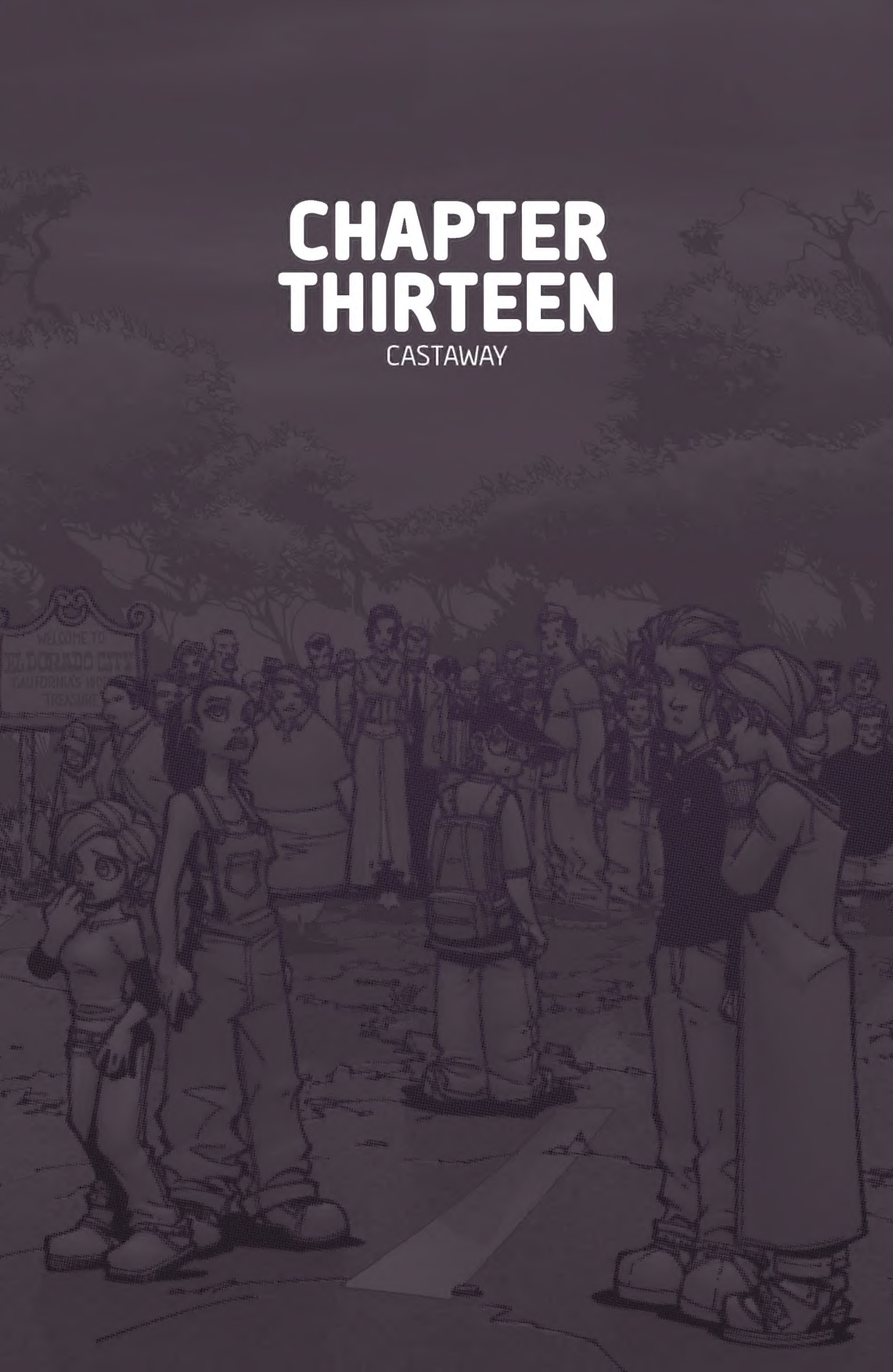
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CASTAWAY

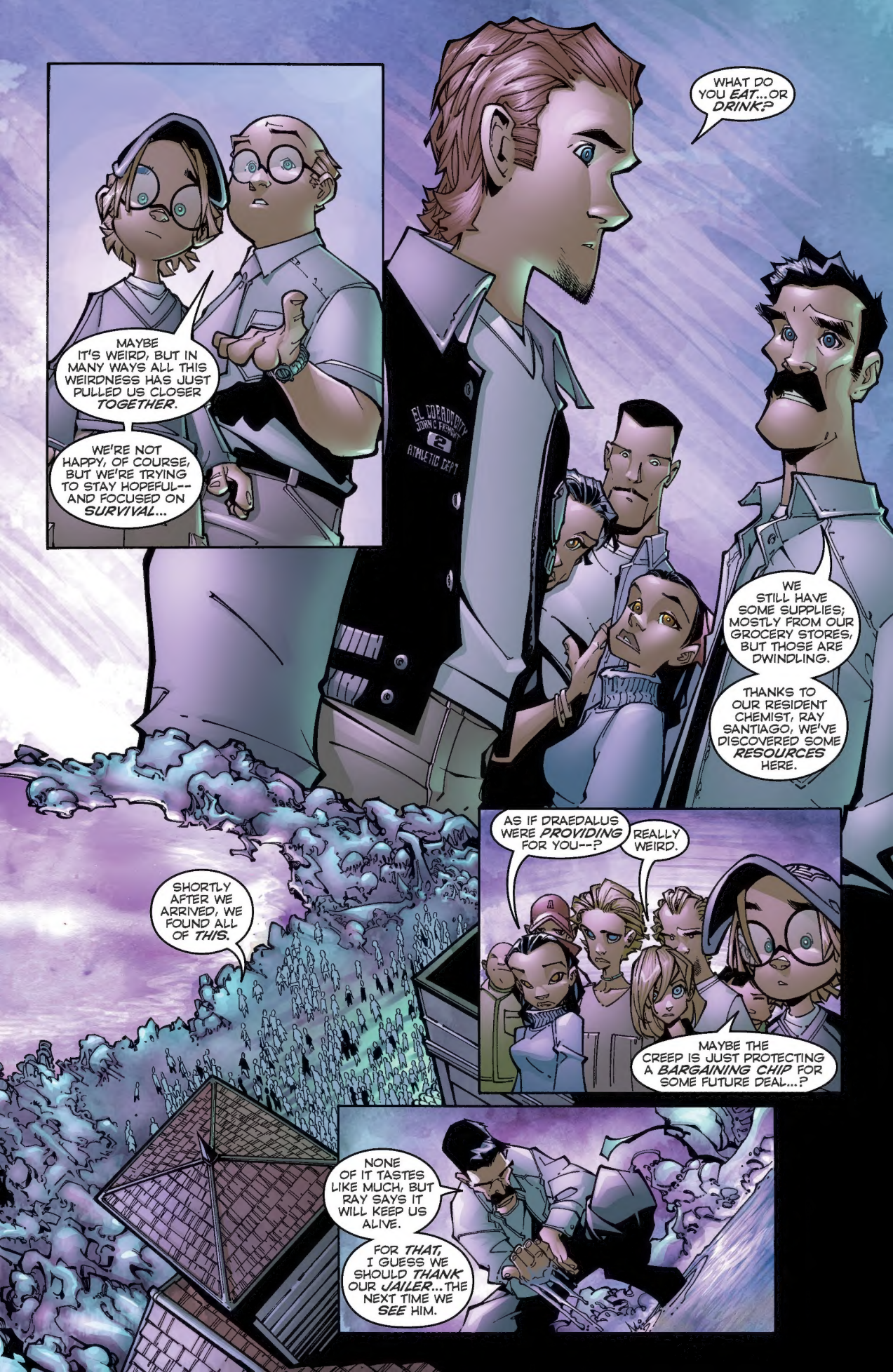


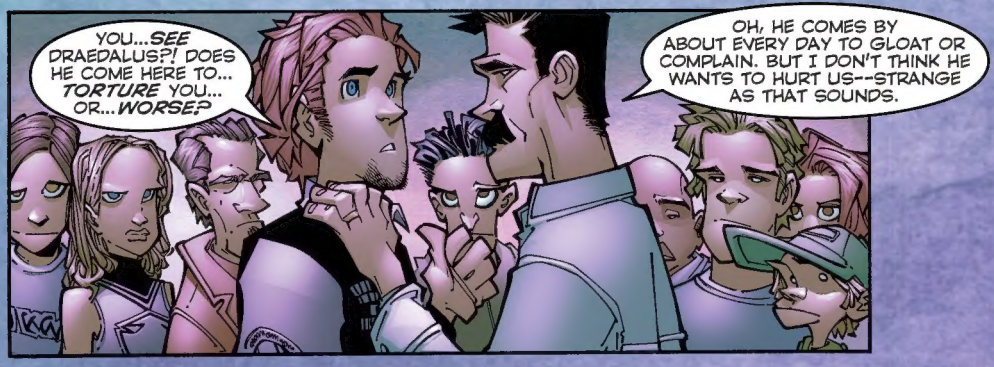
"YOU ALL KNOW HOW IT STARTED...
"...A POWERFUL, EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL SORCERER KNOWN AS DRAEDALUS SET HIS GREEDY SIGHTS ON EARTH--AND TRIED TO ENTER THROUGH OUR LITTLE TOWN...
"THE MONSTER ENTERED EL DORADO CITY SECRETLY--INSIDIOUSLY--UNBEKNOWNST TO MOST CITIZENS...
"BUT WE COULD SEE EVERYTHING.
"THE TOWN HAD BEEN SOLD OUT BY A FEW OF THE MOST TRUSTED LEADERS.
"THEY'D BEEN DUPED INTO TRADING PROSPERITY FOR COOPERATION WITH EVIL.
"WHEN DRAEDALUS TRIED TO BRING HIS FORCES ACROSS, WE SOMEHOW REPELLED THE ATTACK.
"FOR ALL HIS POWER, DRAEDALUS WAS BLOWN BACK TO HIS OWN DIMENSION...
"...UNFORTUNATELY, HE TOOK THE ENTIRE TOWN WITH HIM!
"ALONG WITH ALL OF YOU.
"I'M NOT SURE IT MAKES SENSE, BUT WE HEADED OUT OF TOWN IN ORDER TO FIND YOU AGAIN.
"...BUT IT WORKED. WE DID FIND A WAY TO YOU...
"...THROUGH DRAEDALUS HIMSELF.

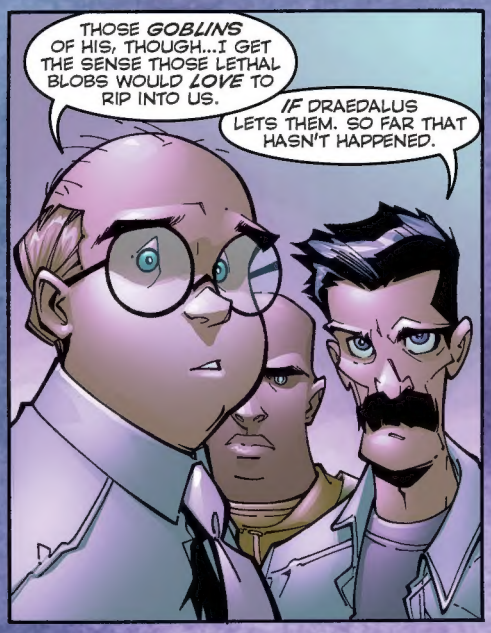
"THROUGH HIS PROJECTED IMAGE...

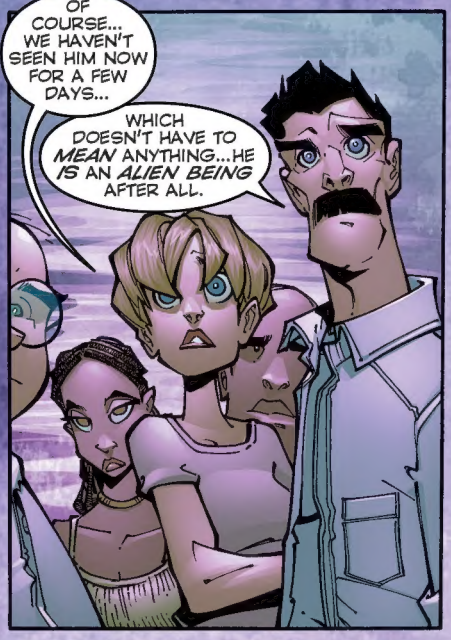
...AND RIGHT HERE TO *YOU.*

THANK GOD.
KEEPING THE TEAM IN SHAPE, LOOMIS?
...YES, SIR, CAP-- ZACH!
YOU GUYS ARE *AWESOME*, MAN.
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS CAN'T GET ANY *WEIRDER*.
WELL... THANKS.
YOU FOLKS ALL SEEM PRETTY OKAY...CONSIDERING THAT YOU'RE TRAPPED ON AN *ALIEN WORLD*...

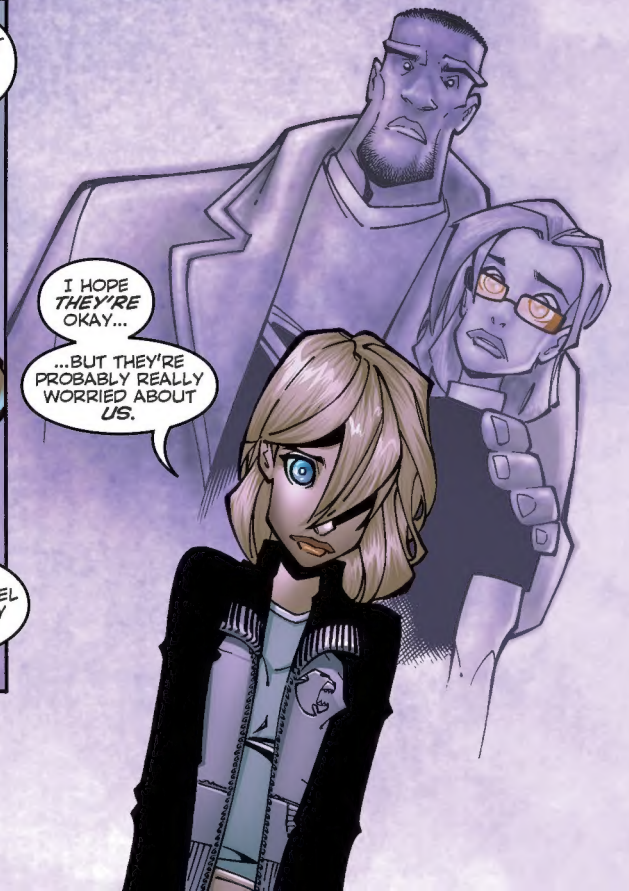

MAYBE IT'S WEIRD, BUT IN MANY WAYS ALL THIS WEIRDNESS HAS JUST PULLED US CLOSER TOGETHER.
WE'RE NOT HAPPY, OF COURSE, BUT WE'RE TRYING TO STAY HOPEFUL--AND FOCUSED ON SURVIVAL...
WHAT DO YOU EAT...OR DRINK?
WE STILL HAVE SOME SUPPLIES; MOSTLY FROM OUR GROCERY STORES, BUT THOSE ARE DWINDLING.
THANKS TO OUR RESIDENT CHEMIST, RAY SANTIAGO, WE'VE DISCOVERED SOME RESOURCES HERE.
SHORTLY AFTER WE ARRIVED, WE FOUND ALL OF THIS.
AS IF DRAEDALUS WERE PROVIDING FOR YOU--?
REALLY WEIRD.
MAYBE THE CREEP IS JUST PROTECTING A BARGAINING CHIP FOR SOME FUTURE DEAL...?
NONE OF IT TASTES LIKE MUCH, BUT RAY SAYS IT WILL KEEP US ALIVE.
FOR THAT, I GUESS WE SHOULD THANK OUR JAILER...THE NEXT TIME WE SEE HIM.


YOU...SEE DRAEDALUS?! DOES HE COME HERE TO... TORTURE YOU... OR...WORSE?
OH, HE COMES BY ABOUT EVERY DAY TO GLOAT OR COMPLAIN. BUT I DON'T THINK HE WANTS TO HURT US--STRANGE AS THAT SOUNDS.

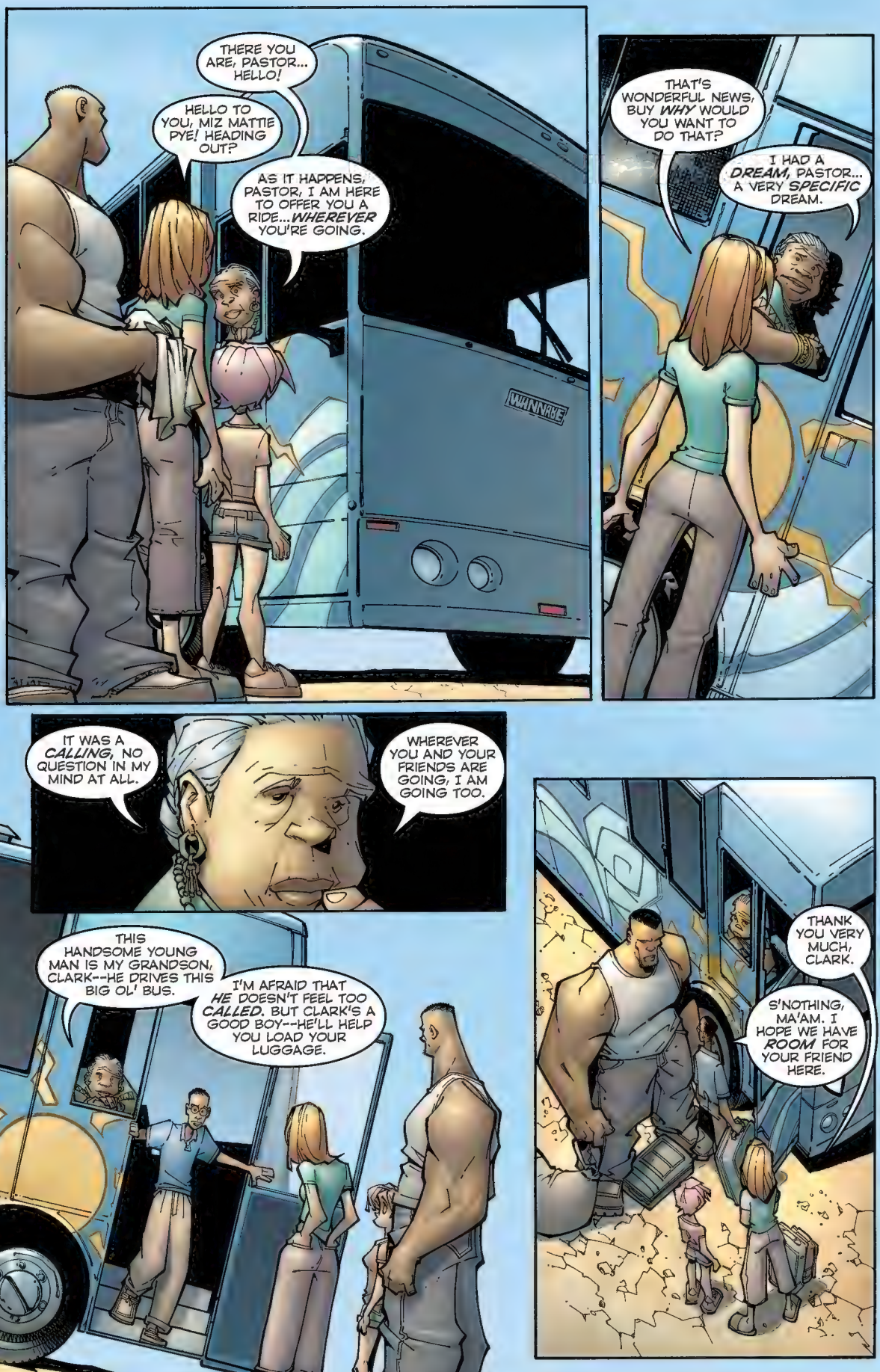

THOSE GOBLINS OF HIS, THOUGH...I GET THE SENSE THOSE LETHAL BLOBS WOULD LOVE TO RIP INTO US.
IF DRAEDALUS LETS THEM. SO FAR THAT HASN'T HAPPENED.


OF COURSE... WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM NOW FOR A FEW DAYS...
WHICH DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN ANYTHING...HE IS AN ALIEN BEING AFTER ALL.

HOW DID YOU GET BY ALONE OUT THERE, CASEY?
OH, WE WEREN'T ALONE, MOM, REVEREND BECKY AND ABEL TOOK CARE OF US--THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT DRAEDALUS.

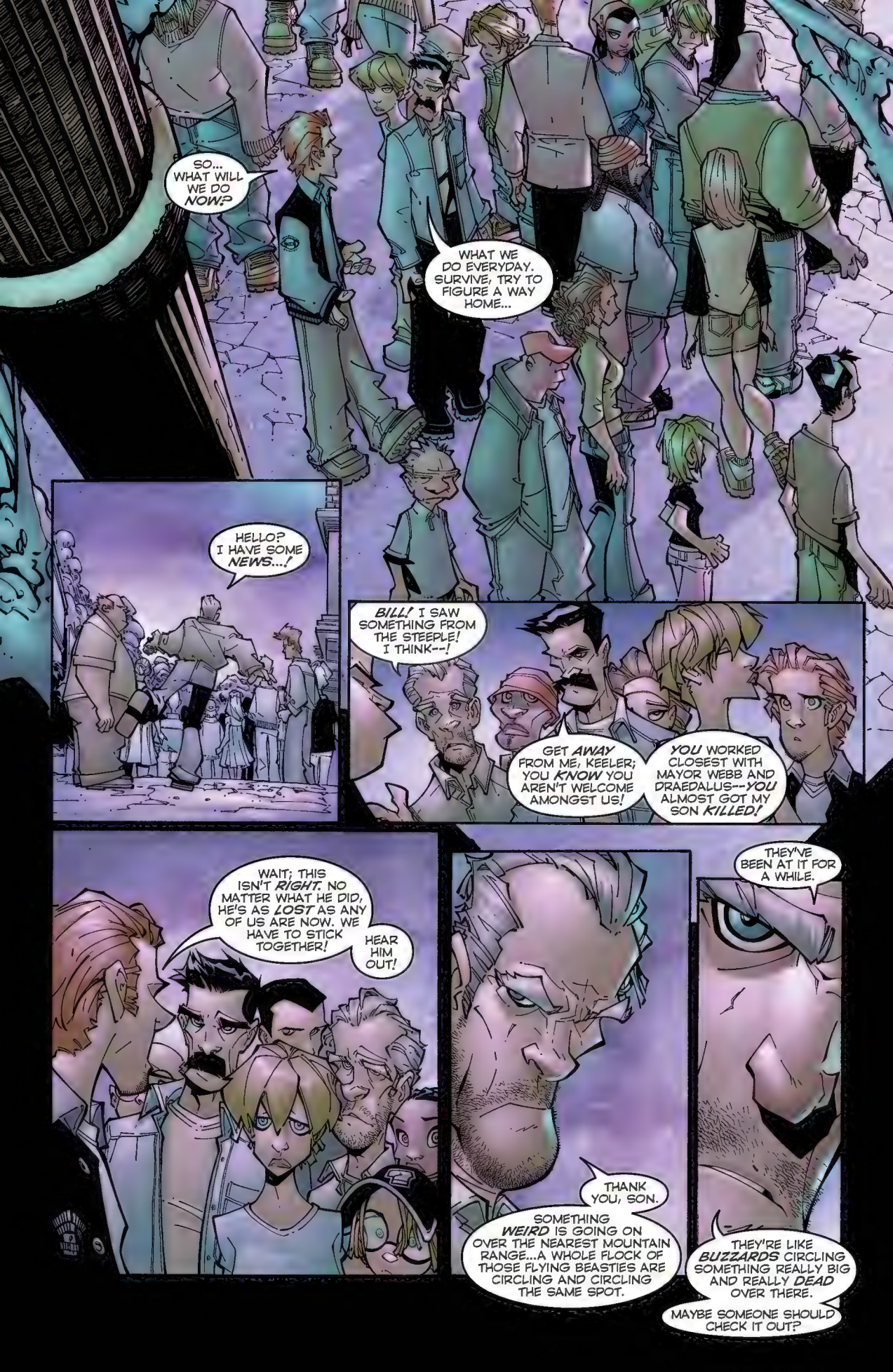

I HOPE THEY'RE OKAY...
...BUT THEY'RE PROBABLY REALLY WORRIED ABOUT US.

I AM OFFICIALLY NOT WORRIED.
THE KIDS VANISH INTO... NEVER-NEVER LAND, AND YOU'RE PRACTICALLY WHISTLING?
I HAD A DREAM. MARK, CASEY, ZACH AND JESS ARE FINE... AND WITH THEIR FAMILIES.
IN NEVER-NEVER LAND, YES, BUT SAFE.
THEY'LL ALL BE FINE; AND WE WILL BRING THEM HOME AGAIN. I AM NOT WORRIED.
MIGHT WANT TO WORRY ABOUT THE BUS-- ABEL CAN'T GET IT GOING.
GOOD THING HE DOESN'T SPEAK, OR MY SHELL-LIKE EARS WOULD HAVE BEEN FRIED BY HIS LANGUAGE.
NOT TO WORRY. THE LORD WILL PROVIDE...
BEEP
HEY, HONS--HAVING TROUBLE?


THERE YOU ARE, PASTOR... HELLO!
HELLO TO YOU, MIZ MATTIE PYE! HEADING OUT?
AS IT HAPPENS, PASTOR, I AM HERE TO OFFER YOU A RIDE...*WHEREVER* YOU'RE GOING.
WINNEBAGO
THAT'S WONDERFUL NEWS, BUT *WHY* WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THAT?
I HAD A *DREAM*, PASTOR... A VERY *SPECIFIC* DREAM.
IT WAS A *CALLING*, NO QUESTION IN MY MIND AT ALL.
WHEREVER YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE GOING, I AM GOING TOO.
THIS HANDSOME YOUNG MAN IS MY GRANDSON, CLARK--HE DRIVES THIS BIG OL' BUS.
I'M AFRAID THAT *HE* DOESN'T FEEL TOO *CALLED*. BUT CLARK'S A GOOD BOY--HE'LL HELP YOU LOAD YOUR LUGGAGE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, CLARK.
S'NOTHING, MA'AM. I HOPE WE HAVE *ROOM* FOR YOUR FRIEND HERE.

WELCOME, PASTOR, WELCOME, FRIENDS.
IF WE'RE TO BE TRAVELING COMPANIONS, MATTIE, YOU HAVE TO CALL ME BECKY. I INSIST.
YOU MET MEGAN YESTERDAY, AND THIS IS MY FRIEND ABEL...AND THERE MAY *NOT* BE ENOUGH ROOM AFTER ALL...
MMM... *MMMM!* IF I WAS ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS YOUNGER I DO BELIEVE I WOULD HAVE JUST THE PLACE FOR THIS GORGEOUS FELLOW...
WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO--YOU JUST HOLLER IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, OKAY, ABEL?
I'M JUST THE CHAUFFEUR HERE, BUT I HAVE TO ASK...
...*WHERE* ARE WE *GOING?*
SET A COURSE FOR ***EL DORADO CITY,*** CALIFORNIA, IF YOU PLEASE, CLARK.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN REVEREND CARL KEELER WOULD COME UP HERE TO SURVEY THE CITY AS IF IT WERE HIS OWN FIEFDOM.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE WHOLE CITY WAS UPROOTED AND REPLANTED IN THIS HELLISH PLACE
BEFORE HE HELPED SELL HIS OWN PEOPLE TO THE DEVIL WHO RULES THIS AWFUL PLACE.
HE NEEDS TO TELL THEM OF THIS. HE DOUBTS THEY WILL LISTEN.


SO... WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?
WHAT WE DO EVERYDAY. SURVIVE, TRY TO FIGURE A WAY HOME...
HELLO? I HAVE SOME NEWS...!
BILL! I SAW SOMETHING FROM THE STEEPLE! I THINK--!
GET AWAY FROM ME, KEELER; YOU KNOW YOU AREN'T WELCOME AMONGST US!
YOU WORKED CLOSEST WITH MAYOR WEBB AND DRAEDALUS--YOU ALMOST GOT MY SON KILLED!
WAIT; THIS ISN'T RIGHT. NO MATTER WHAT HE DID, HE'S AS LOST AS ANY OF US ARE NOW. WE HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER!
HEAR HIM OUT!
THEY'VE BEEN AT IT FOR A WHILE.
THANK YOU, SON.
SOMETHING WEIRD IS GOING ON OVER THE NEAREST MOUNTAIN RANGE...A WHOLE FLOCK OF THOSE FLYING BEASTIES ARE CIRCLING AND CIRCLING THE SAME SPOT.
THEY'RE LIKE BUZZARDS CIRCLING SOMETHING REALLY BIG AND REALLY DEAD OVER THERE.
MAYBE SOMEONE SHOULD CHECK IT OUT?

...MAY NOT BE ANYTHING, BUT I DON'T THINK WE CAN AFFORD TO OVERLOOK ANYTHING ABOUT OUR NEW AND HOSTILE SURROUNDINGS.
IT SHOULD TAKE US A FEW HOURS TO GET THERE...
I'M GOING TOO.
SON... THIS MAY BE VERY DANGEROUS...!
DAD, TRUST ME, DANGER AND I ARE NOT STRANGERS.
WE FOUGHT DRAEDALUS OFF TWICE, REMEMBER...
RIGHT--WE MAY NEED YOU TO PROTECT US, ZACH.
NAH, FOR THAT YOU'LL NEED ME!
I'M THE MUSCLE OF THE GROUP, AFTER ALL.

EARTH.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.
...LOVELY, LOVELY TOWN, EH, KATE?
OH YES, I FORGOT. MAYOR WEBB HAS LEFT THE BUILDING. CHECKED OUT, GONE FISHING, ROUND THE *BEND*.
WELL, KATE, WELCOME TO THE CITY OF THE GOLDEN GATE--WHERE MANY A *TREASURE* CAN BE FOUND.
INCLUDING MINE. THE DIMENSIONAL POWER *TALISMAN* BOTH YOUR OLD BEAU DRAEDALUS AND I SEEK IS *HERE* SOMEWHERE.

COCKTAIL
SALE
OPEN
THIS CITY IS MY *OYSTER*, KATIE; AND I CAN'T WAIT TO LAY HANDS ON THAT *PEARL!*
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YET, BUT IT *WILL* BE *MINE!* AS WILL THE VASTNESS OF THE *MULTIVERSE* ITSELF!
SAN FRANCISCO ATTRACTS MYSTICAL SEEKERS FROM ALL OVER... IT'S ONLY LOGICAL THAT THE TALISMAN WOULD DRIFT HERE, TOO.
LIU J
IT'S WAITING FOR ME SOMEWHERE; I CAN *FEEL* IT.

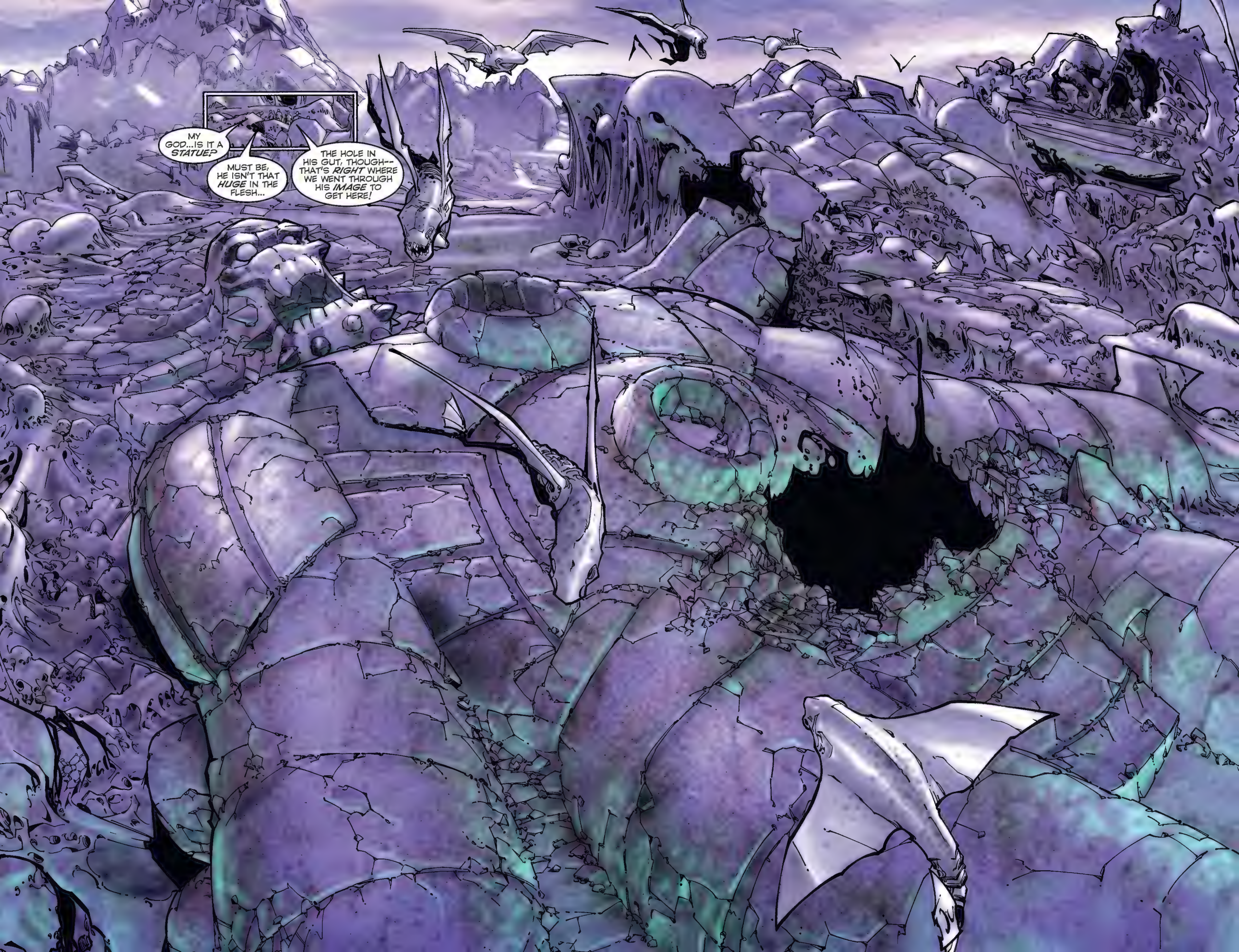
COME ON... WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?
THIS IS WHERE BECKY'S CHURCH WOULD BE...
SHE SAVED US SO MANY TIMES... I ALREADY MISS HER.
WE'LL SEE HER AGAIN, JESS-- SOON.
WELL, WE'RE OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD...
AH...THE CHESHIRE CAT, I PRESUME...?

YARREEEEEEEEEEEE
THAT WAS SO *NOT* ANIMAL PLANET.
SO, AFTER *ALL* WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH, ARE WE *TOO JADED* TO FIND THIS WHOLE DEAL COMPLETELY *MIND-BLOWING?*
I DON'T KNOW, I'M PRETTY WELL BLOWN, MYSELF.
YEAH, ME TOO--JUST CHECKING.
THERE'S WAY TOO MUCH TIME TO *THINK*. IT'S TONS EASIER TO JUST THROW YOURSELF ON THE GRENADE WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE SMART.
WAY TOO MUCH TIME...

GRRRAAAARRRR!
AIEEEE!
GOOD LORD!
GRAAAAHHHH!
MULLINS! LOOK OUT!
THUNK
GRARRRRLLL!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

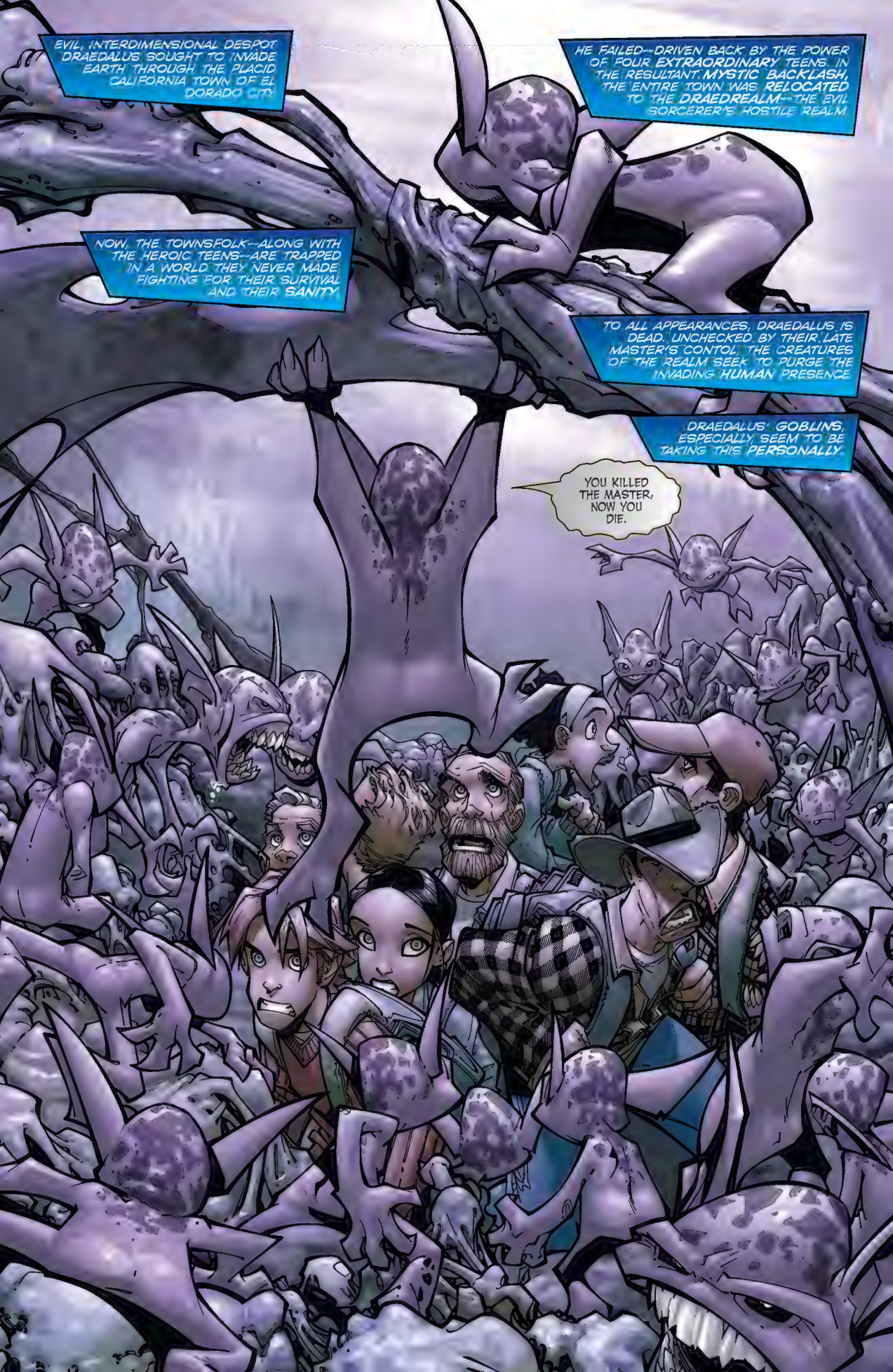
GRAAAEEEEEEE!
SPATCH
SPLAK
SPUKK
GRAAARRRR!
GRAAAAAHHHH!
BLAMM
SPLUSSH
RAEEEEEE!

GRRRR...
THANK YOU, SWEETHEART.
ANY TIME, DADDY.
WHO KNOWS HOW MANY MORE OF THOSE THERE ARE? LET'S KEEP MOVING!
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE FROM *HERE!*
SWEET JESUS...!


MY GOD...IS IT A STATUE?
MUST BE, HE ISN'T THAT HUGE IN THE FLESH...
THE HOLE IN HIS GUT, THOUGH-- THAT'S RIGHT WHERE WE WENT THROUGH HIS IMAGE TO GET HERE!

WHAT DOES THIS *MEAN*? IS HE *DEAD*?
AND IF HE IS...HOW WILL WE *EVER* GET OUT OF HIS WORLD?!
THAT WON'T MATTER, GIRLIE...YOU WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE... ***SNNRRRR***...
YOU HAVE ***KILLED*** THE ***MASTER***...YOU WILL NOW ***DIE*** TOO!

CHAPTER
FOURTEEN
SEARCHERS


EVIL, INTERDIMENSIONAL DESPOT DRAEDALUS SOUGHT TO INVADE EARTH THROUGH THE PLACID CALIFORNIA TOWN OF EL DORADO CITY.
HE FAILED--DRIVEN BACK BY THE POWER OF FOUR EXTRAORDINARY TEENS. IN THE RESULTANT MYSTIC BACKLASH, THE ENTIRE TOWN WAS RELOCATED TO THE DRAEDREALM--THE EVIL SORCERER'S HOSTILE REALM.
NOW, THE TOWNSFOLK--ALONG WITH THE HEROIC TEENS--ARE TRAPPED IN A WORLD THEY NEVER MADE, FIGHTING FOR THEIR SURVIVAL AND THEIR SANITY.
TO ALL APPEARANCES, DRAEDALUS IS DEAD. UNCHECKED BY THEIR LATE MASTER'S CONTOL, THE CREATURES OF THE REALM SEEK TO PURGE THE INVADING HUMAN PRESENCE.
DRAEDALUS' GOBLINS, ESPECIALLY, SEEM TO BE TAKING THIS PERSONALLY.
YOU KILLED THE MASTER, NOW YOU DIE.

YAAAAAAAAAHHRRRR!!

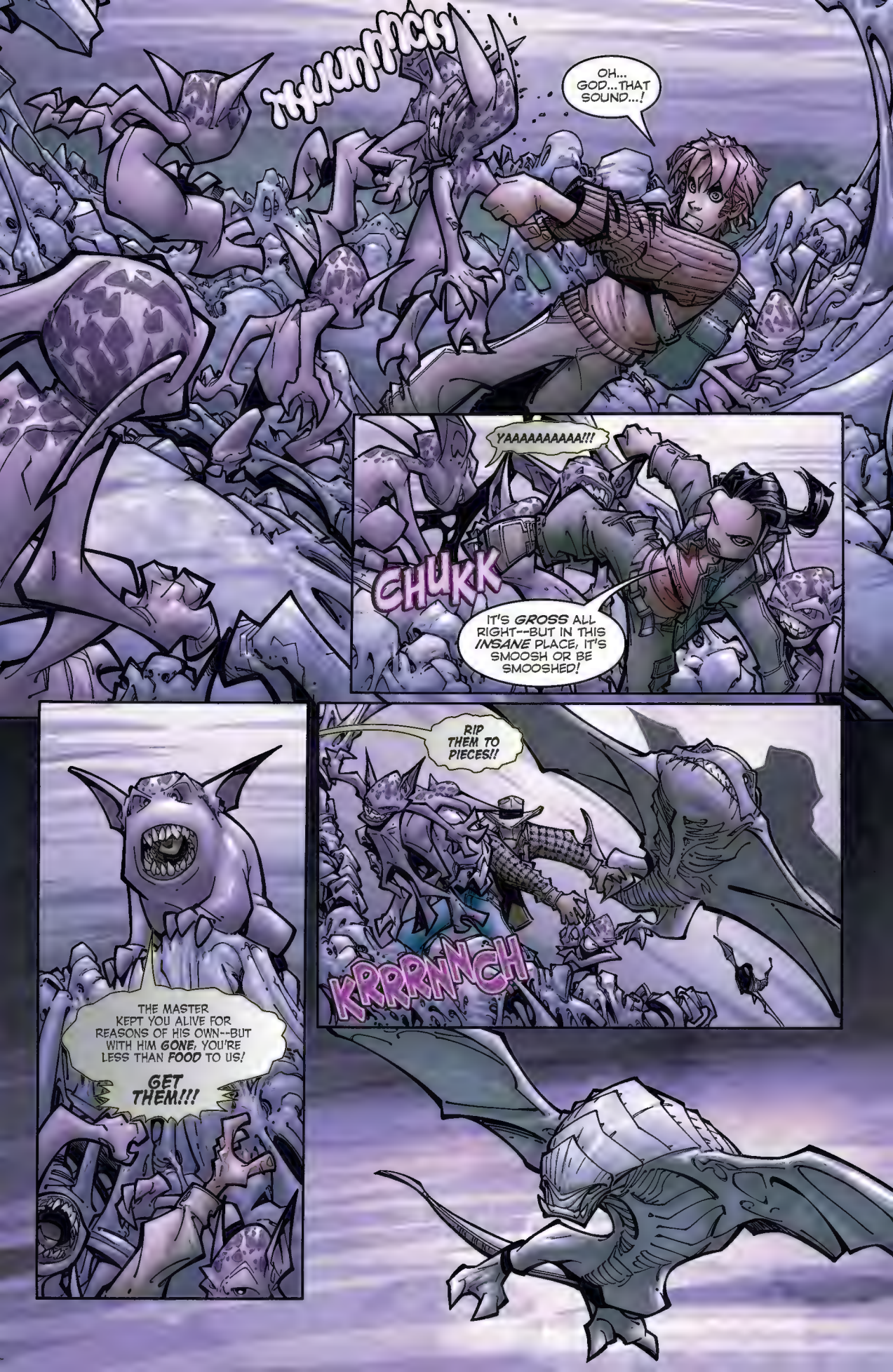
WHAM

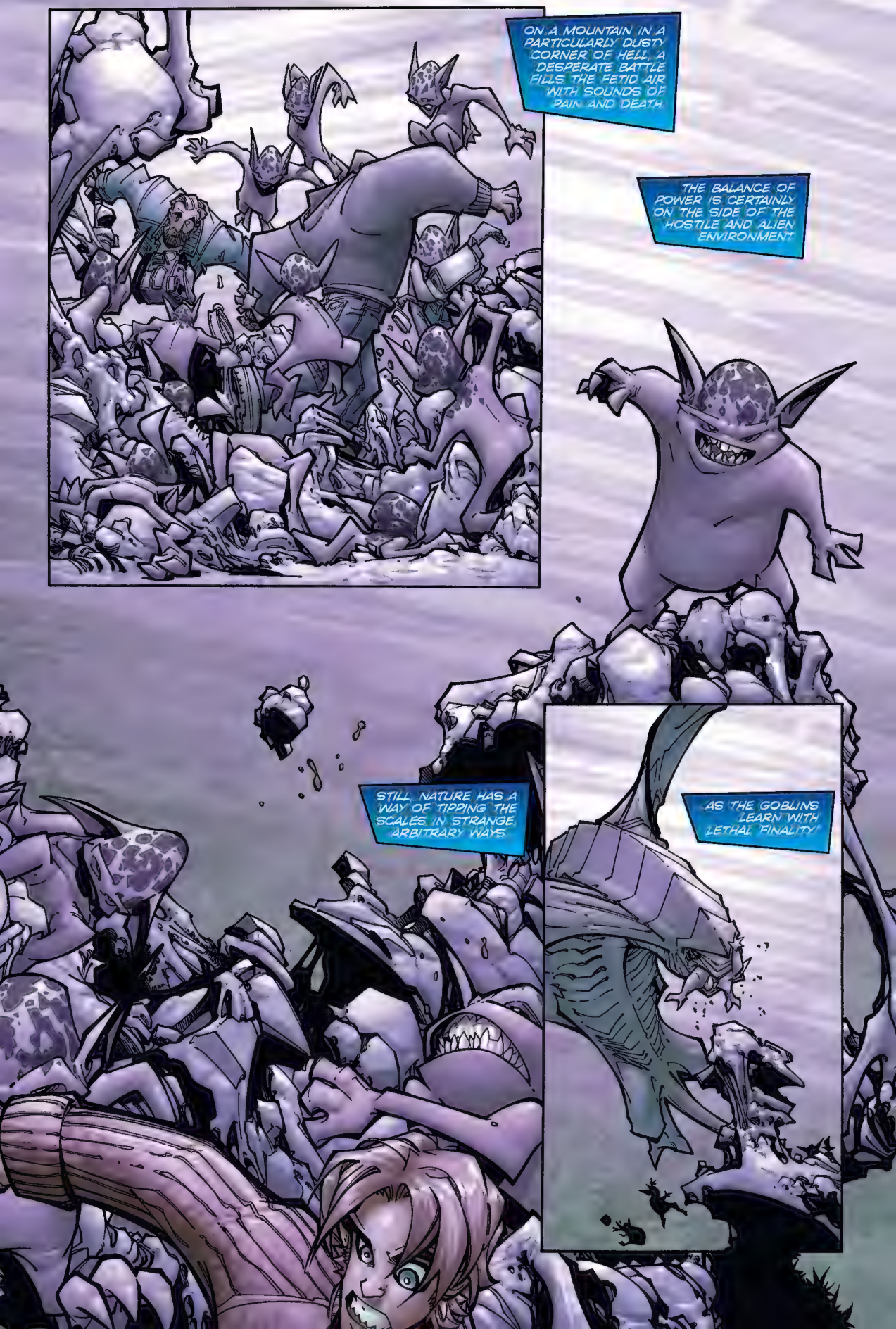
GOOD LORD, THESE THINGS ARE UNSTOPPABLE!

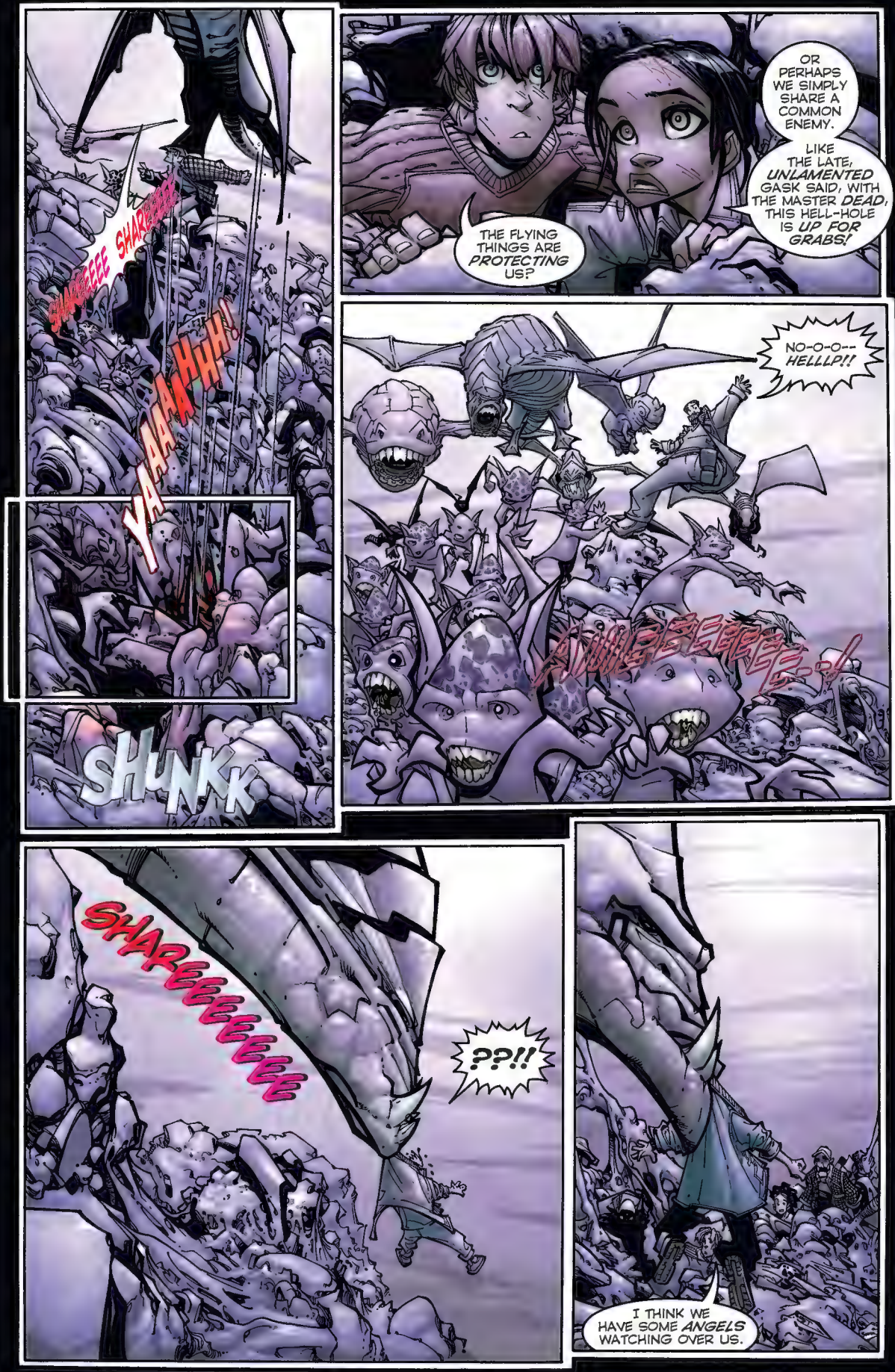
KRRRNCH

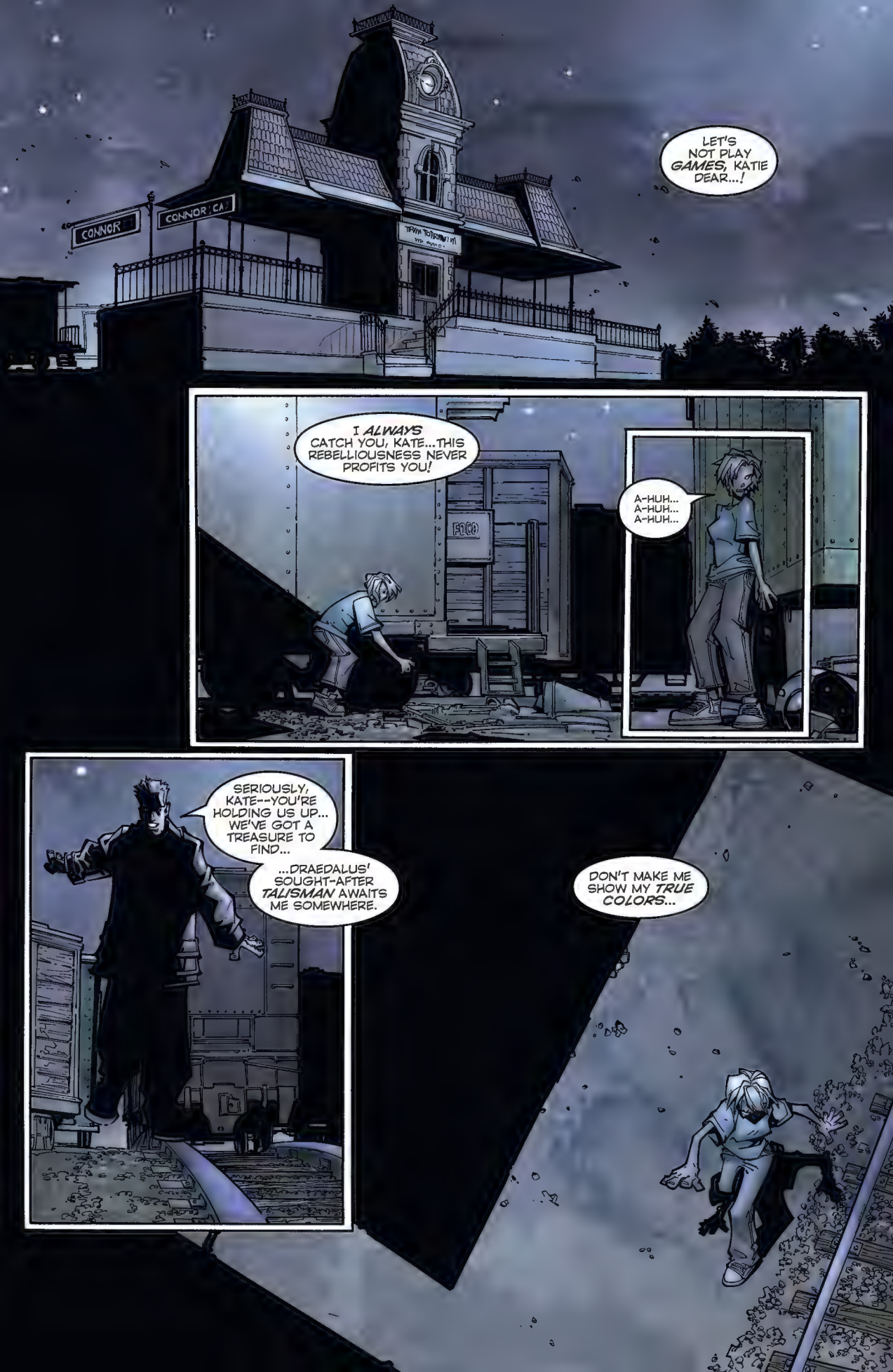
THUD

THWAK


HUUUNNNCH
OH... GOD...THAT SOUND...!
YAAAAAAAAAA!!!
CHUKK
IT'S GROSS ALL RIGHT--BUT IN THIS INSANE PLACE, IT'S SMOOSH OR BE SMOOSHED!
RIP THEM TO PIECES!!
KRRRNNCH
THE MASTER KEPT YOU ALIVE FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN--BUT WITH HIM GONE, YOU'RE LESS THAN FOOD TO US!
GET THEM!!!

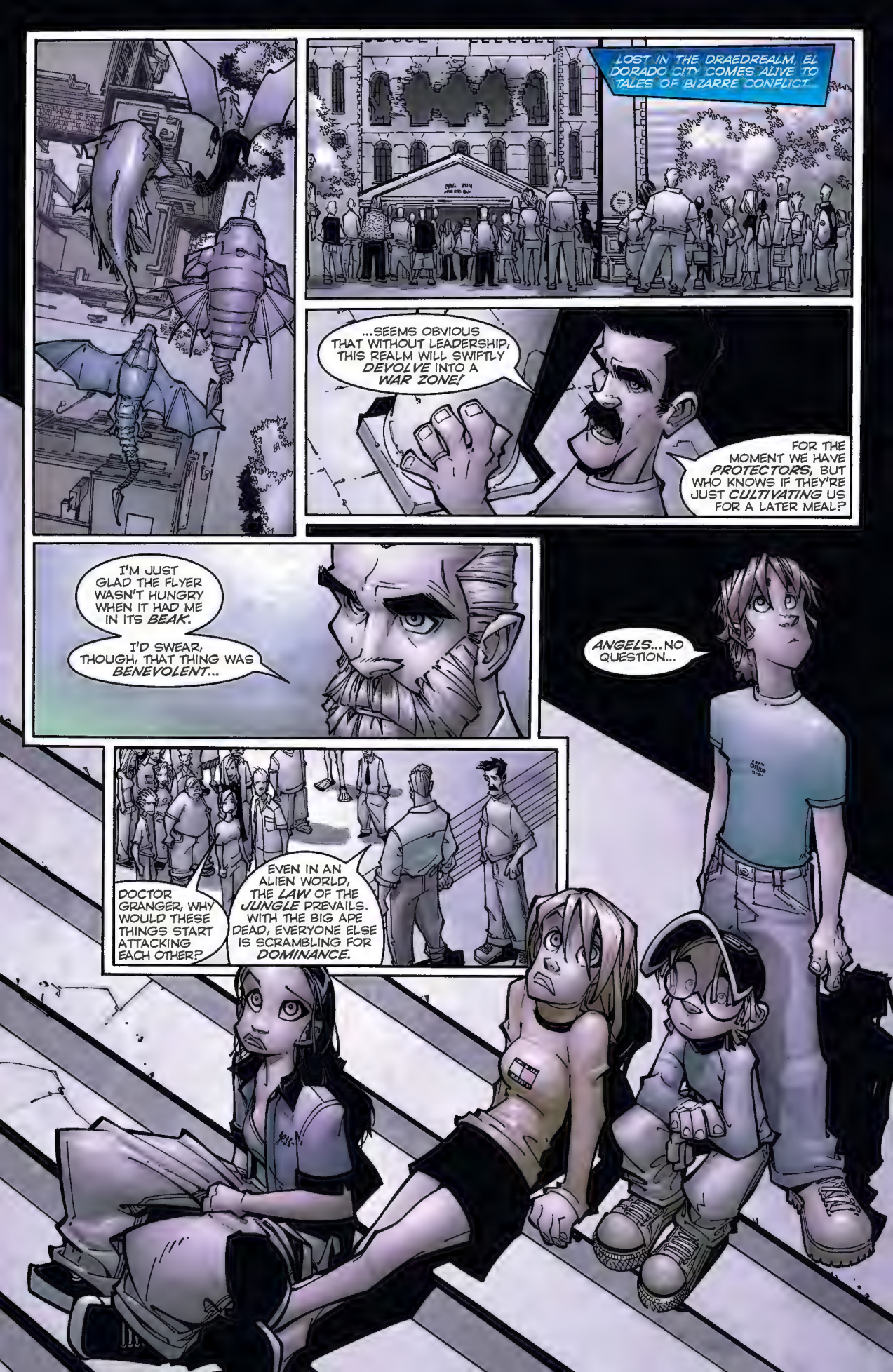

ON A MOUNTAIN IN A PARTICULARLY DUSTY CORNER OF HELL, A DESPERATE BATTLE FILLS THE FETID AIR WITH SOUNDS OF PAIN AND DEATH.
THE BALANCE OF POWER IS CERTAINLY ON THE SIDE OF THE HOSTILE AND ALIEN ENVIRONMENT.
STILL, NATURE HAS A WAY OF TIPPING THE SCALES IN STRANGE, ARBITRARY WAYS.
AS THE GOBLINS LEARN WITH LETHAL FINALITY!


SHAREEEE SHAREEEE
YAHHHHHH
SHUNKK
THE FLYING THINGS ARE PROTECTING US?
OR PERHAPS WE SIMPLY SHARE A COMMON ENEMY.
LIKE THE LATE, UNLAMENTED GASK SAID, WITH THE MASTER DEAD, THIS HELL-HOLE IS UP FOR GRABS!
NO-O-O--- HELLLP!!
AHHHEEEEE...!
SHAREEEEEEEE
??!!
I THINK WE HAVE SOME ANGELS WATCHING OVER US.


CONNOR
CONNOR, CA
LET'S NOT PLAY GAMES, KATIE DEAR...!
I ALWAYS CATCH YOU, KATE...THIS REBELLIOUSNESS NEVER PROFITS YOU!
A-HUH... A-HUH... A-HUH...
SERIOUSLY, KATE--YOU'RE HOLDING US UP... WE'VE GOT A TREASURE TO FIND...
...DRAEDALUS' SOUGHT-AFTER TALISMAN AWAITS ME SOMEWHERE.
DON'T MAKE ME SHOW MY TRUE COLORS...

SIGH
SHIIIICK-K-K-K
REMEMBER, KATE...YOU ASKED FOR IT.
KATIE...?!
POOR BAY-BEE SHE FAWW DOWN, GO BOOM---?
...PLEASE... NO...

MAYBE NOW WE'LL SEE IF SHE CAN GO CRUNCH AND SQUISH TOO.


LOST IN THE DRAEDREALM, EL DORADO CITY COMES ALIVE TO TALES OF BIZARRE CONFLICT
...SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT WITHOUT LEADERSHIP, THIS REALM WILL SWIFTLY DEVOLVE INTO A WAR ZONE!
FOR THE MOMENT WE HAVE PROTECTORS, BUT WHO KNOWS IF THEY'RE JUST CULTIVATING US FOR A LATER MEAL?
I'M JUST GLAD THE FLYER WASN'T HUNGRY WHEN IT HAD ME IN ITS BEAK.
I'D SWEAR, THOUGH, THAT THING WAS BENEVOLENT...
ANGELS...NO QUESTION...
DOCTOR GRANGER, WHY WOULD THESE THINGS START ATTACKING EACH OTHER?
EVEN IN AN ALIEN WORLD, THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE PREVAILS. WITH THE BIG APE DEAD, EVERYONE ELSE IS SCRAMBLING FOR DOMINANCE.

AS DOC SAYS, THIS JUNGLE'S ABOUT TO EXPLODE! WE'D BETTER BE READY FOR THINGS TO GET DANGEROUS!
AS OPPOSED TO THE PICNIC IT IS NOW?
OBVIOUSLY, THE BEST WAY TO NOT BE CAUGHT UP IN THE COMING WAR IS TO GET BACK TO EARTH...
...WE'RE OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS, BUT THAT MAY BE A REAL LONG SHOT...
NO...
THERE IS A WAY OUT. I KNOW IT.
OR...I GUESS I SHOULD SAY I FEEL IT.
YOU FEEL MORE THAN MOST OF US WILL EVER KNOW, MARK!
DRAEDALUS STARTED ALL OF THIS TO CLAIM A TALISMAN OF GREAT POWER. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS PRIZE WAS HIDDEN SOMEWHERE ON EARTH.
DRAEDALUS WAS ALSO CONVINCED THAT THIS TALISMAN WAS A... UNIVERSAL KEY OF SOME SORT TO ALLOW THE BEARER TO MOVE FREELY BETWEEN ALL DIMENSIONS.

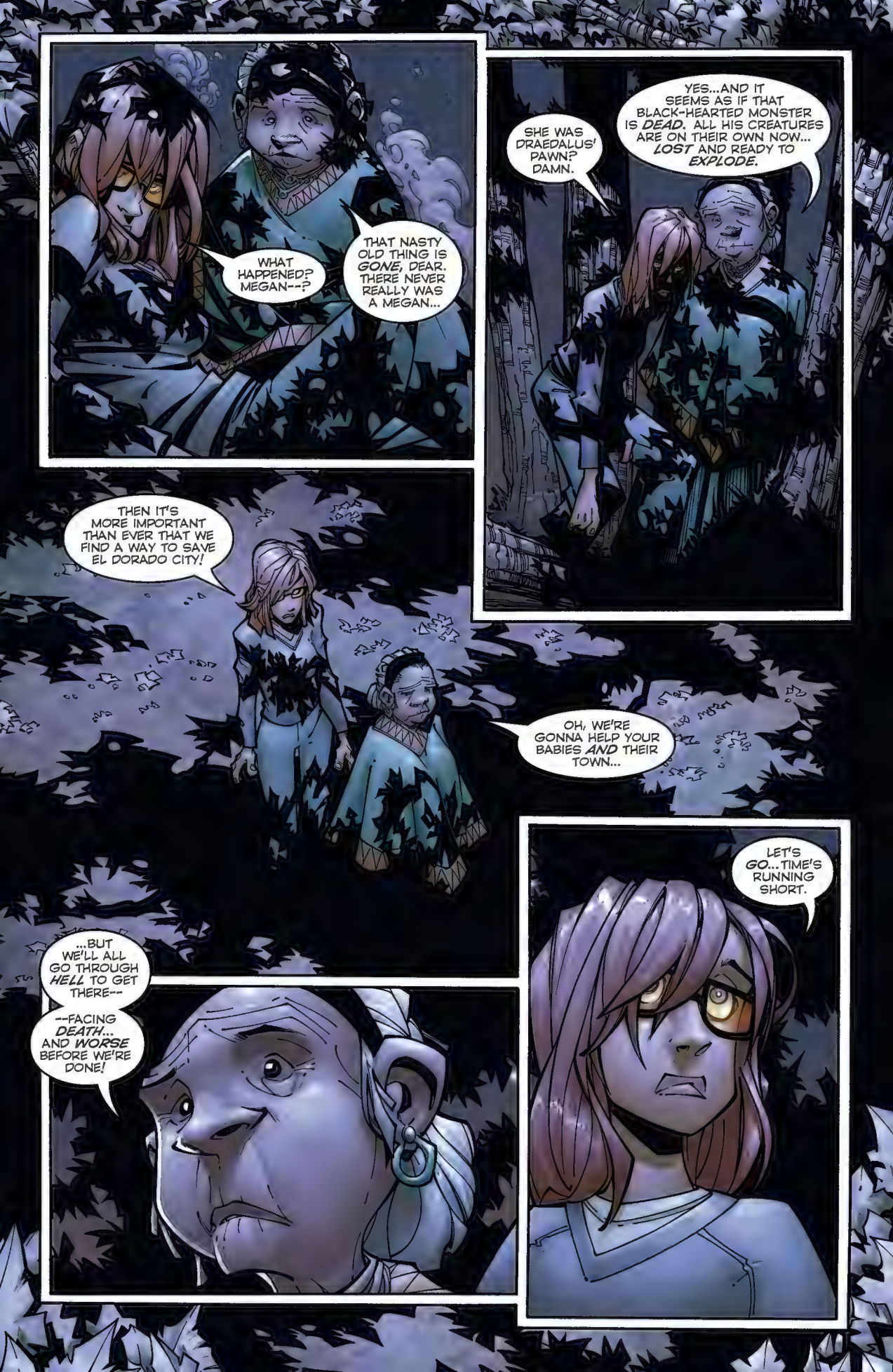
IRONICALLY, HE WAS *RIGHT* ON BOTH COUNTS, IT *IS* THAT POWERFUL...AND IT *WAS* HIDDEN ON EARTH.
WAS? WHERE IS IT *NOW?*
YEAH... ABOUT *THAT...*
...THAT'S WHERE IT GETS *IRONIC.*
SEE...IT'S BEEN RIGHT *HERE* IN EL DORADO CITY ALL ALONG!
I WISH I COULD SAY EXACTLY *WHERE*...BUT THE TALISMAN IS *HERE.*
AND IT *IS* OUR TICKET HOME...
...IT COULD BE *ANYWHERE.*

ON EARTH.
...TELLING YOU, REVEREND BECKY, THAT NUTTY OLD LADY IS *UP* TO SOMETHING!
THIS IS SWEET MATTIE PYE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, MEGAN?
THE LADY WHO REROUTED HER ENTIRE LIFE TO GIVE US A RIDE IN HER *MOTOR HOME?*
NO--MATTIE'S A *SWEETHEART.*
SHE'S GOT YOU IN HER POCKET, I GUESS--ALL THAT *'HONEY-SWEETIE'* TALK...
...SHE'S *WEIRD*... AND I KNOW SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING *BAD!*
MEGAN, THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU AT ALL...YOU'RE REACTING WAY OUT OF PROPORTION.

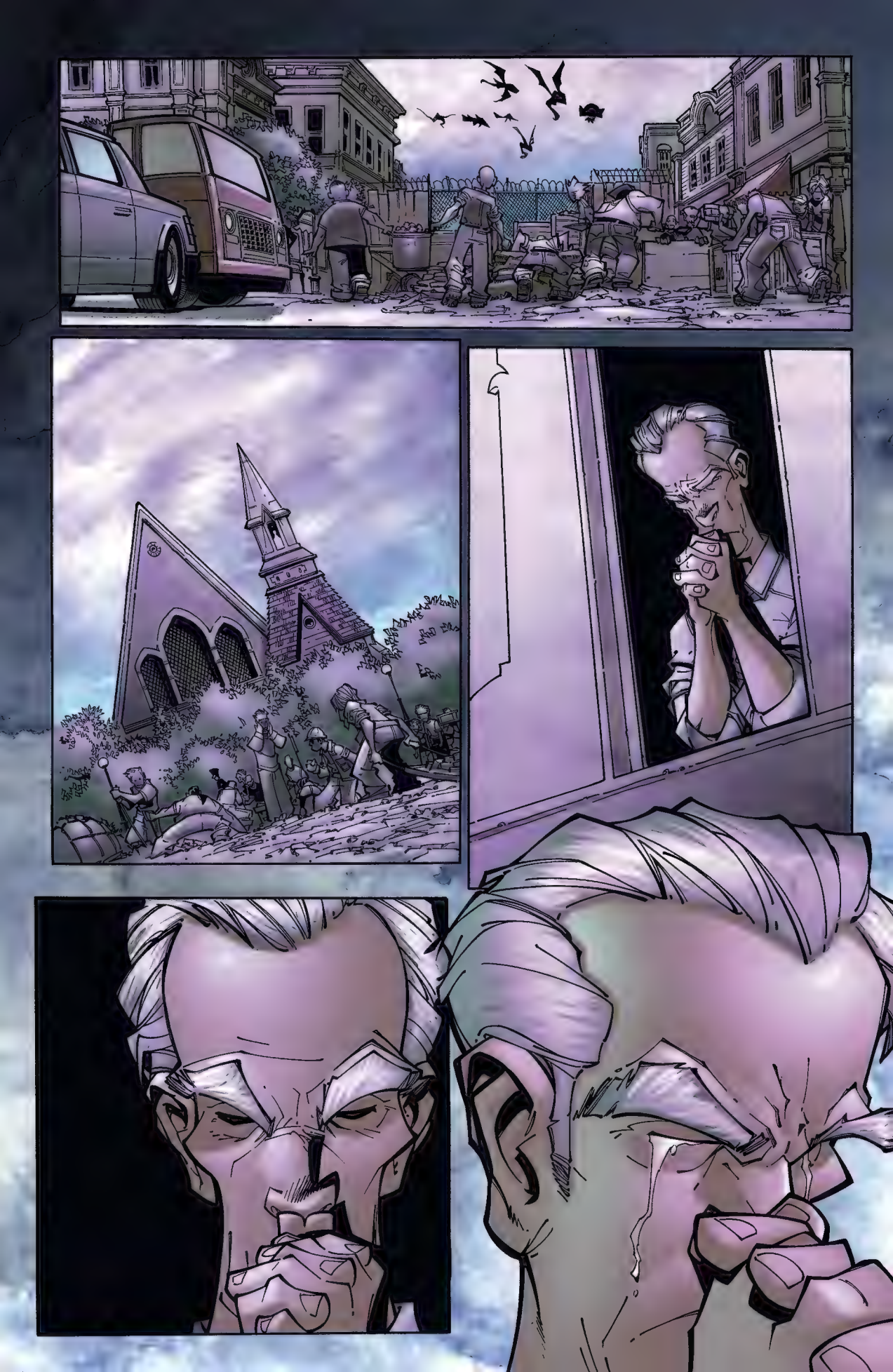
THIS IS SO TYPICAL! I'M JUST A KID, SO MY OPINION DOESN'T COUNT!
I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
THE OLD BAT IS INSANE! SHE NEEDS TO DIE!!
GOOD LORD... MEGAN--? WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
FORGET THE LORD...HE WON'T SAVE YOU...
WHAM

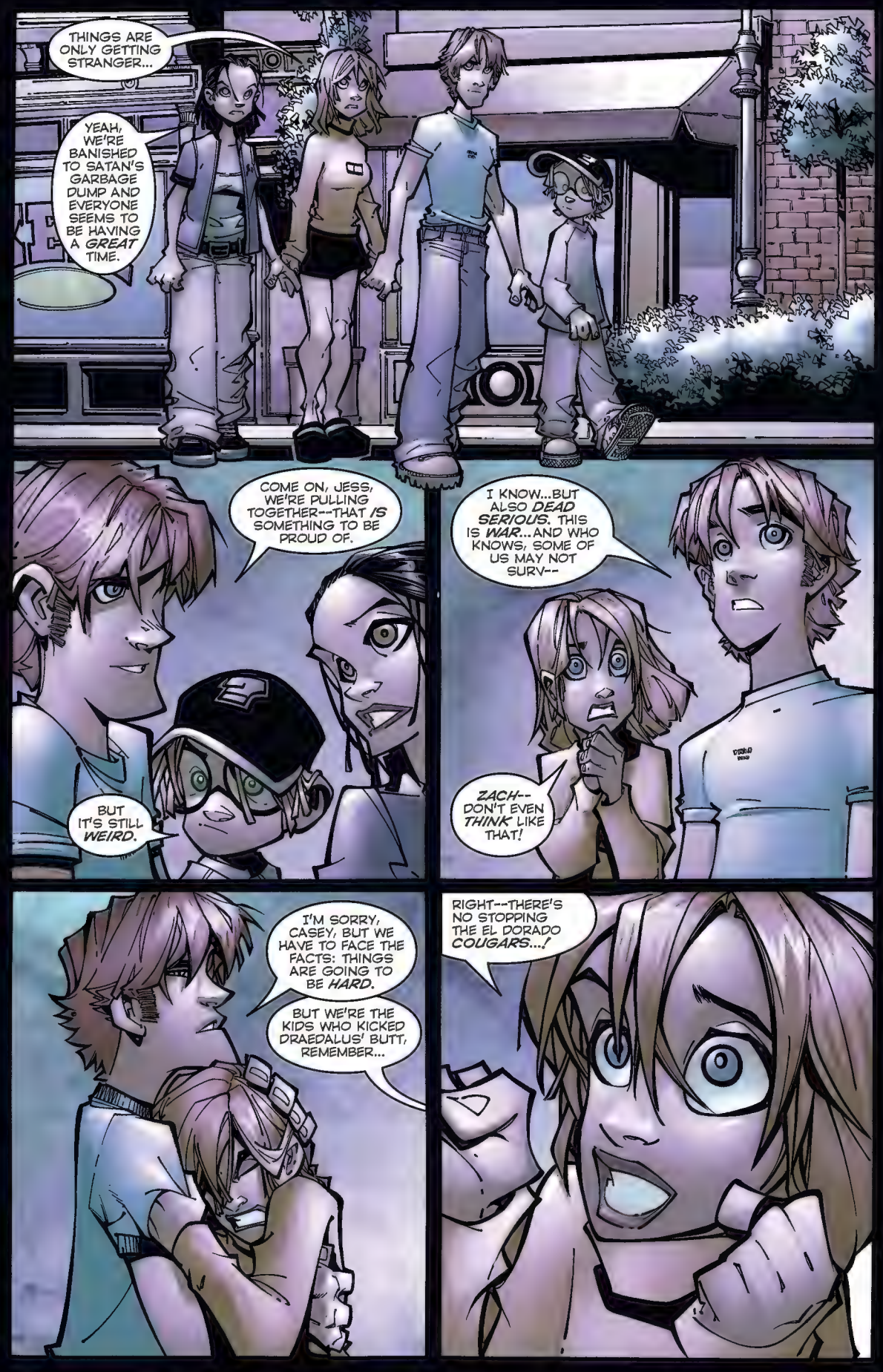
NO MORE OF THIS CHARADE--- I CANNOT TOLERATE THIS SHAM FORM ONE SECOND LONGER!
DRAEDALUS HAS APPARENTLY ABANDONED ME HERE ON THIS WRETCHED DIRTBALL...
...BUT I WILL FULFILL THE MISSION HE GAVE ME---I WILL KILL YOU AND ALL THOSE CLOSE TO YOU!
HE HATED YOU MOST OF ALL, PREACHER... HE'D WANT ME TO DO THIS PAINFULLY.
AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME.
THAT WOULD BE MY JOB, DEVIL.

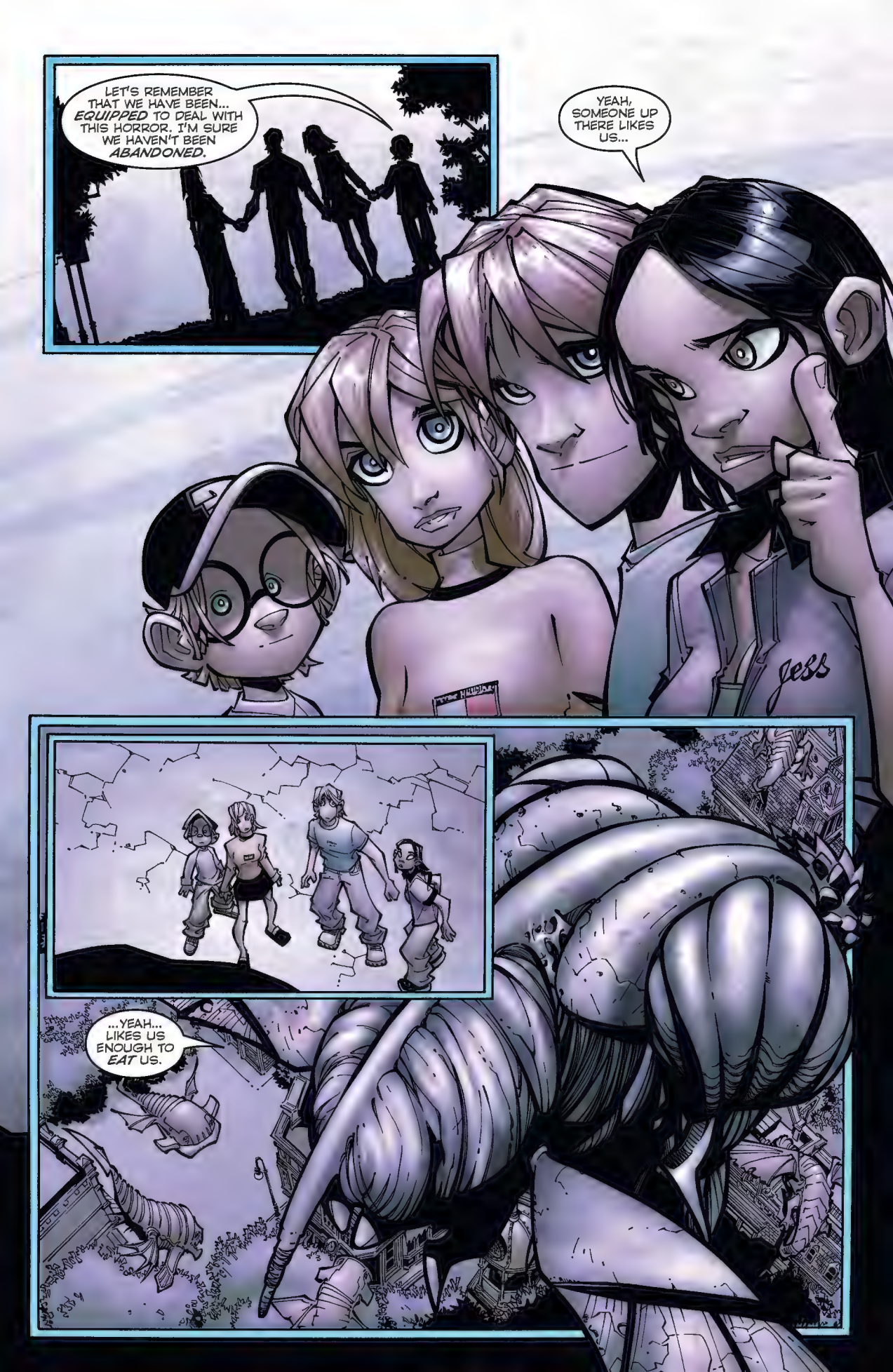
I'VE BEEN WONDERING *WHEN* YOU'D ACT.
IF ONLY THIS OLD BODY WASN'T SO *SLOW* I'D HAVE ARRIVED IN TIME TO SPARE THE POOR PASTOR SOME PAIN.
THAT, AT LEAST, WON'T GET ANY WORSE.
MATTIE PYE. YOU'RE NEXT--DON'T WORRY, CRONE.
NO. YOU'RE FINISHED HERE.
GET LOST!
NO-O-O-O-O-N--!
SWOOOOOOOOSH


WHAT HAPPENED? MEGAN--?
THAT NASTY OLD THING IS GONE, DEAR. THERE NEVER REALLY WAS A MEGAN...
SHE WAS DRAEDALUS' PAWN? DAMN.
YES...AND IT SEEMS AS IF THAT BLACK-HEARTED MONSTER IS DEAD. ALL HIS CREATURES ARE ON THEIR OWN NOW... LOST AND READY TO EXPLODE.
THEN IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER THAT WE FIND A WAY TO SAVE EL DORADO CITY!
OH, WE'RE GONNA HELP YOUR BABIES AND THEIR TOWN...
LET'S GO...TIME'S RUNNING SHORT.
...BUT WE'LL ALL GO THROUGH HELL TO GET THERE--
--FACING DEATH... AND WORSE BEFORE WE'RE DONE!

AS TERRIBLE AS IT IS, WAR OFTEN HAS AN AMAZINGLY POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE HUMAN PSYCHE...
A COMMON ENEMY UNITES EVEN THE MOST DISPARATE A PEOPLE.
AND IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH.




THINGS ARE ONLY GETTING STRANGER...
YEAH, WE'RE BANISHED TO SATAN'S GARBAGE DUMP AND EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE HAVING A GREAT TIME.
COME ON, JESS, WE'RE PULLING TOGETHER--THAT IS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF.
BUT IT'S STILL WEIRD.
I KNOW...BUT ALSO DEAD SERIOUS. THIS IS WAR...AND WHO KNOWS, SOME OF US MAY NOT SURV--
ZACH-- DON'T EVEN THINK LIKE THAT!
I'M SORRY, CASEY, BUT WE HAVE TO FACE THE FACTS: THINGS ARE GOING TO BE HARD.
BUT WE'RE THE KIDS WHO KICKED DRAEDALUS' BUTT, REMEMBER...
RIGHT--THERE'S NO STOPPING THE EL DORADO COUGARS...!


LET'S REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE BEEN... EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THIS HORROR. I'M SURE WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABANDONED.
YEAH, SOMEONE UP THERE LIKES US...
...YEAH... LIKES US ENOUGH TO EAT US.

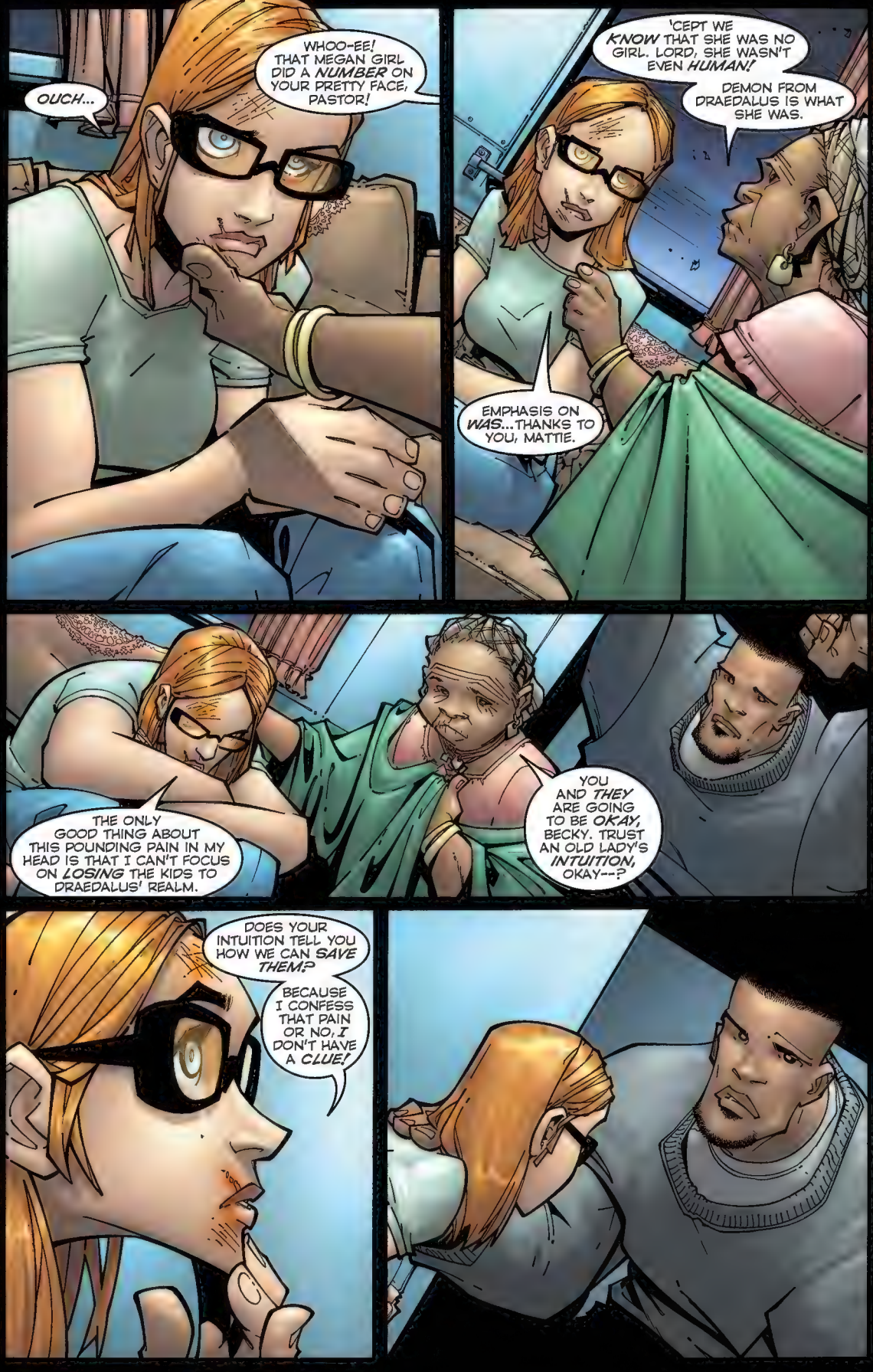
IF ANYONE IS OUT THERE...
...HELP!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LIFE GOES ON

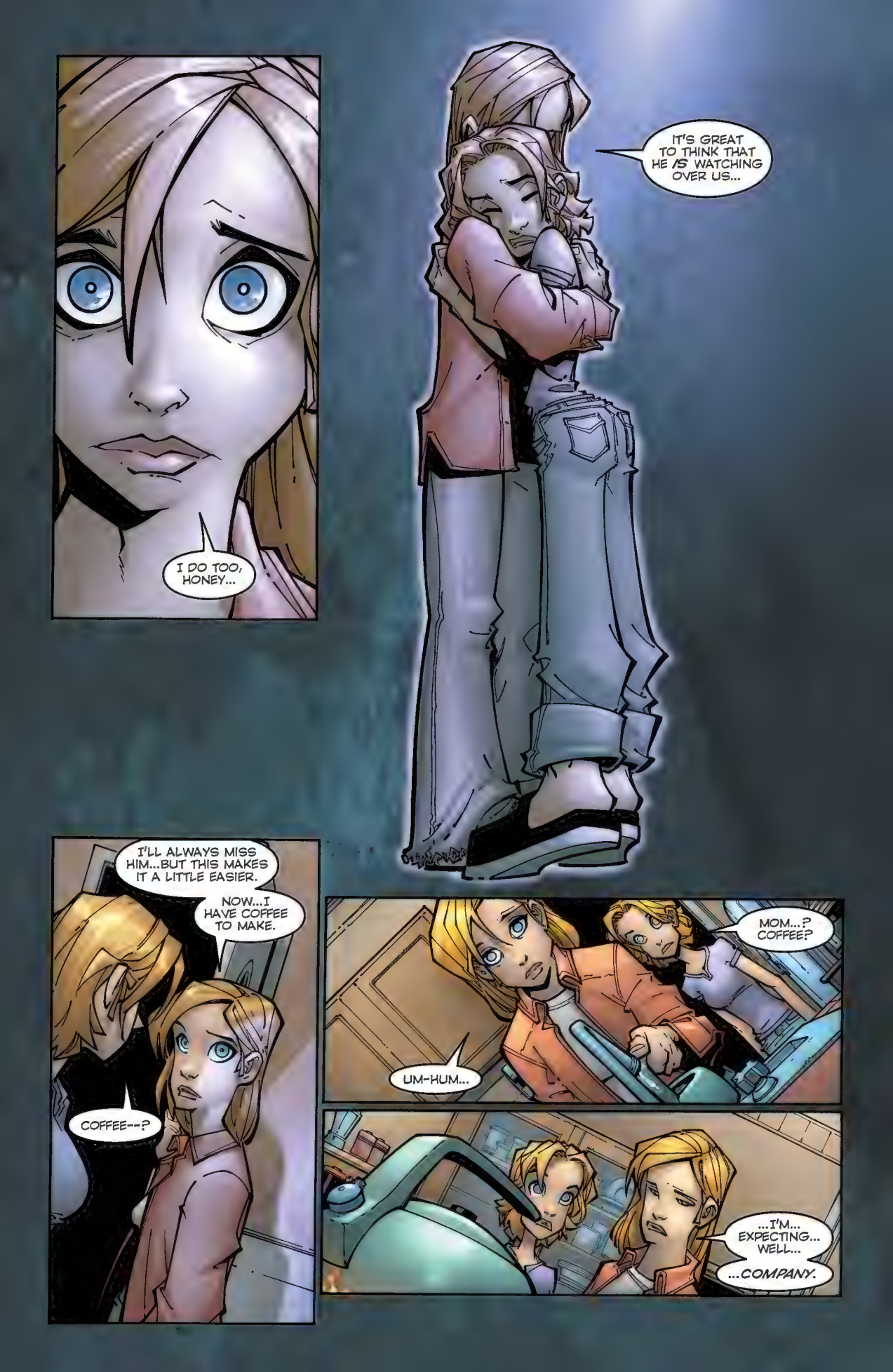
WATER COMES OUT OF THE FAUCET?!
THAT'S NEWS TO YOU, JESS?
WELL... YEAH--!
SHLLSSSH

THE ENTIRE TOWN HAS BEEN MAGICALLY TRANSPORTED TO THIS OTHERDIMENSIONAL DUMP!
THERE ISN'T ENOUGH PIPE TO REACH ALL THE WAY BACK TO EARTH! WHERE DOES THIS WATER COME FROM?
WE DON'T KNOW HOW IT WORKS, DEAR--IT JUST DOES. WE ASSUME THAT IT'S DRAEDALUS' SORCERY AT WORK.
I TESTED THE WATER THOUGH...AND IT'S A BIT OFF CHEMICALLY, BUT SAFE.
SO THE MOST EVIL JERK IN THE UNIVERSE HOOKED YOU UP?! WHY?!
WE DON'T KNOW. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT HE'S SEEN TO IT THAT EDIBLE PLANTS GROW ABUNDANTLY HERE AS WELL.
PLUS THE GROCERY STORES STILL HAVE PLENTY OF CANNED GOODS...
HE'S KEEPING US LIKE GOLDFISH!
WAS...ANYWAY. EVERYONE THINKS DRAEDALUS IS DEAD, REMEMBER.
THOUGH ALL HE SET UP TO TAKE CARE OF US IS STILL WORKING.
YOU BOTH SOUND LIKE YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS HELLHOLE!
OF COURSE NOT, JESS...WE DESPERATELY WANT TO GO HOME--ALL WE'RE SAYING IS THAT WE ARE SURVIVING UNTIL WE CAN.
YES, SWEETIE, AFTER ALL... LIFE GOES ON...


OUCH...
WHOO-EE! THAT MEGAN GIRL DID A NUMBER ON YOUR PRETTY FACE, PASTOR!
'CEPT WE KNOW THAT SHE WAS NO GIRL. LORD, SHE WASN'T EVEN HUMAN!
DEMON FROM DRAEDALUS IS WHAT SHE WAS.
EMPHASIS ON WAS...THANKS TO YOU, MATTIE.
THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT THIS POUNDING PAIN IN MY HEAD IS THAT I CAN'T FOCUS ON LOSING THE KIDS TO DRAEDALUS' REALM.
YOU AND THEY ARE GOING TO BE OKAY, BECKY. TRUST AN OLD LADY'S INTUITION, OKAY--?
DOES YOUR INTUITION TELL YOU HOW WE CAN SAVE THEM?
BECAUSE I CONFESS THAT PAIN OR NO, I DON'T HAVE A CLUE!

YOU'LL FIND THEM. YOU'RE MEANT TO, BELIEVE ME.
UNNNN--!
BUT YOU NEED TO REST NOW, SWEETIE.
WHOA, GRANDMA, WE'VE GOT PEA SOUP ROLLING IN--WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STOP...
YOU DO WHAT YOU NEED TO, CLARK. WE CAN ALL USE SOME DOWN TIME...
ESPECIALLY THIS POOR THING...

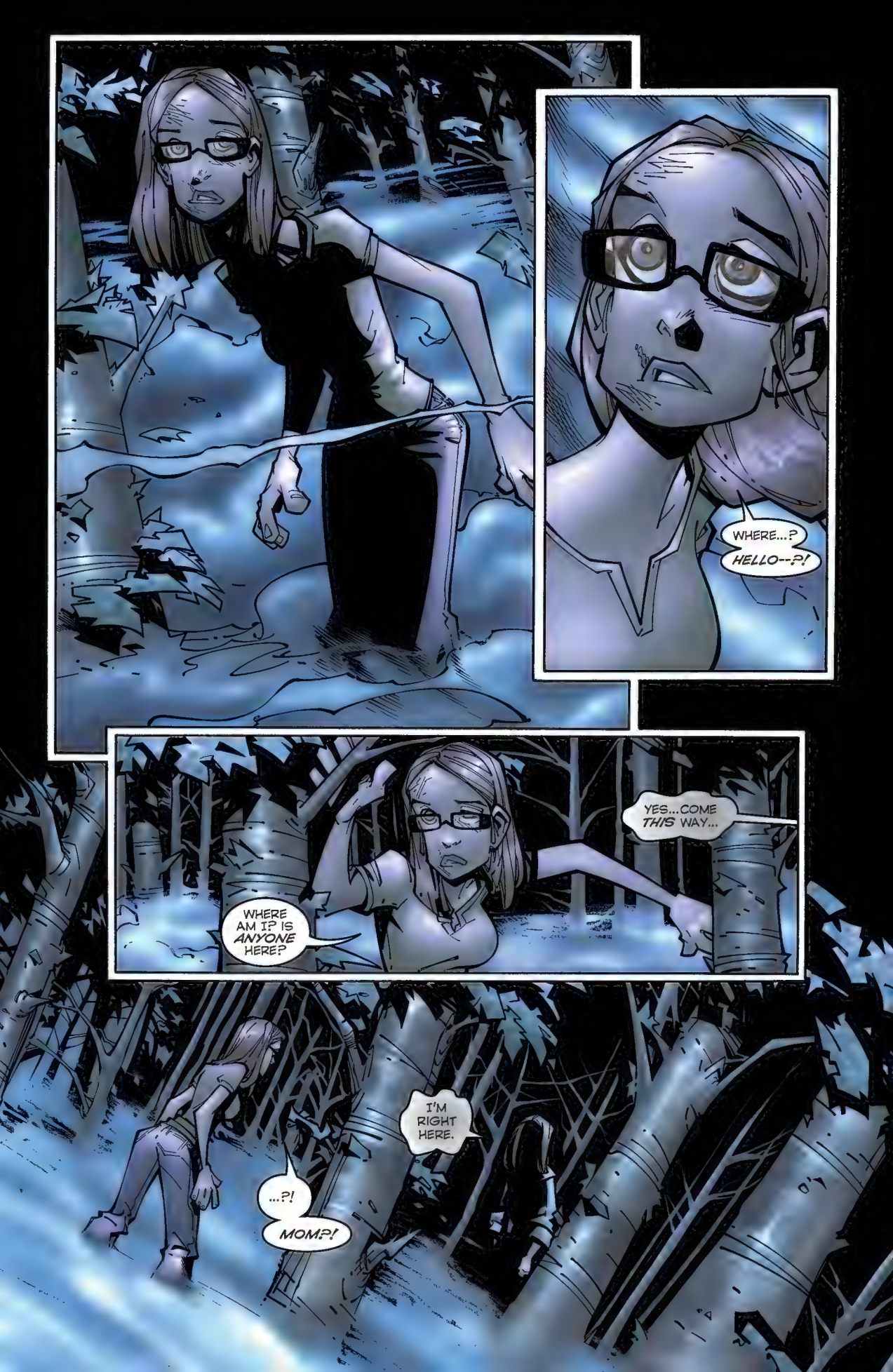
WEIRD, HUH, MOM--? BACK IN THE REAL WORLD MOST OF THESE FOLKS WOULDN'T EVEN TALK TO EACH OTHER.
NOT SO STRANGE, CASEY. TRAGEDY DRAWS PEOPLE TOGETHER.
PEOPLE ALSO TEND TO... ACCLIMATE TO EVEN THE MOST DIFFICULT SITUATIONS--MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS, YOU KNOW?
IT'S HOW WE SURVIVE.
LIFE GOES ON.
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT ACCLIMATING, THOUGH...ZACH, JESS, MARK AND I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE MOST TOTALLY RIDICULOUS STUFF WITHOUT BLINKING.
YES--YOU THINK YOU WON'T BUT YOU JUST GET THROUGH IT.
THAT'S HOW I HANDLED IT WHEN I LOST YOUR FATHER...
I HAD A DREAM OF DADDY. HE SAID HE WAS PROUD OF ME, THAT HE LOVED BOTH OF US...
...I BELIEVE IT WAS REALLY HIM...REALLY SPEAKING TO ME.


I DO TOO, HONEY...
IT'S GREAT TO THINK THAT HE *IS* WATCHING OVER US...
I'LL ALWAYS MISS HIM...BUT THIS MAKES IT A LITTLE EASIER.
NOW...I HAVE COFFEE TO MAKE.
COFFEE--?
MOM...? COFFEE?
UM-HUM...
...I'M... EXPECTING... WELL...
...COMPANY.

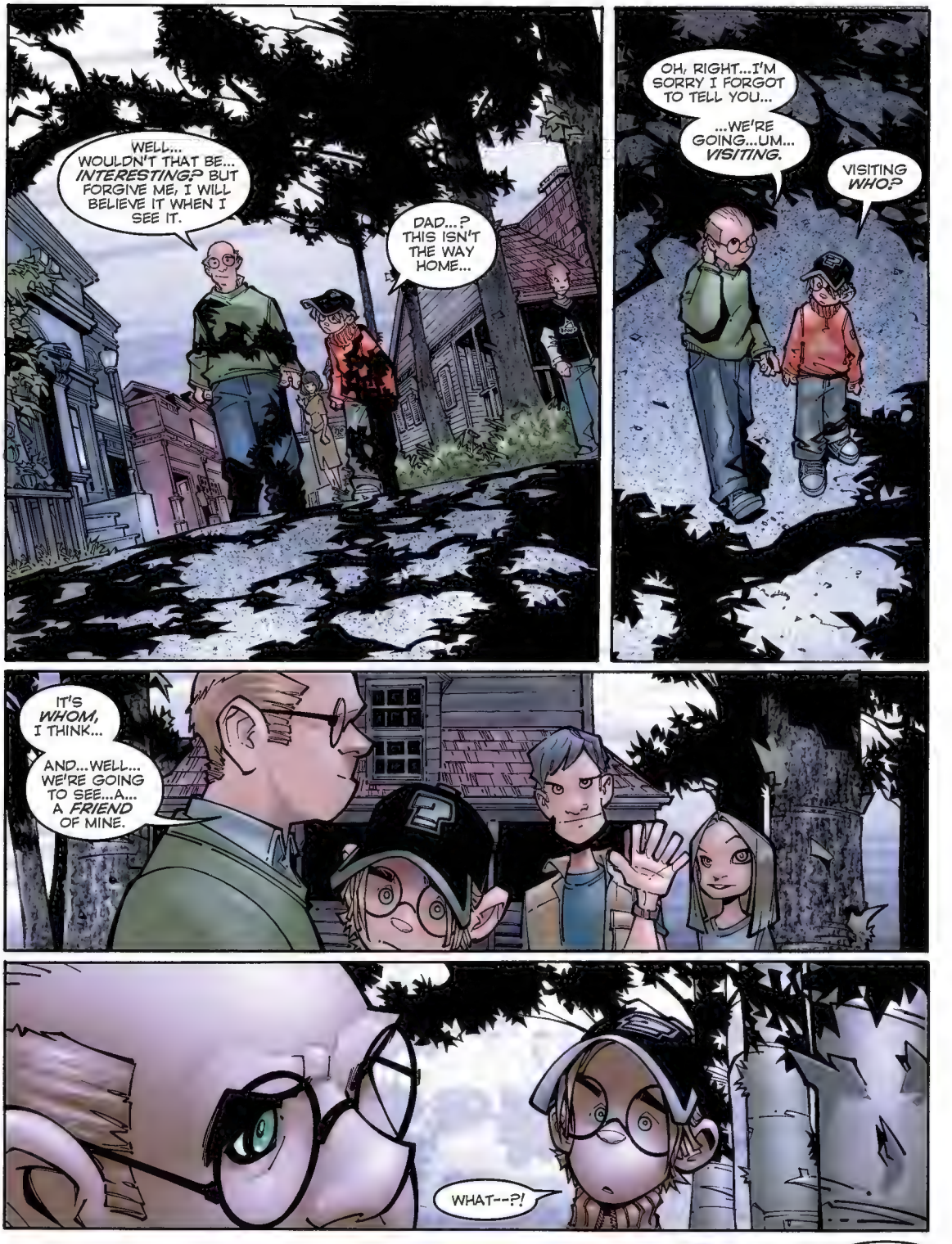
WHAT--?!
OKAY, MATTIE... WAKE UP... SOMETHING'S NOT *RIGHT*...
GZZZAAAAWWWWWW
MY, MY, MY... SUCH A *QUIET* BOY IN THE DAYTIME...
OH NO!

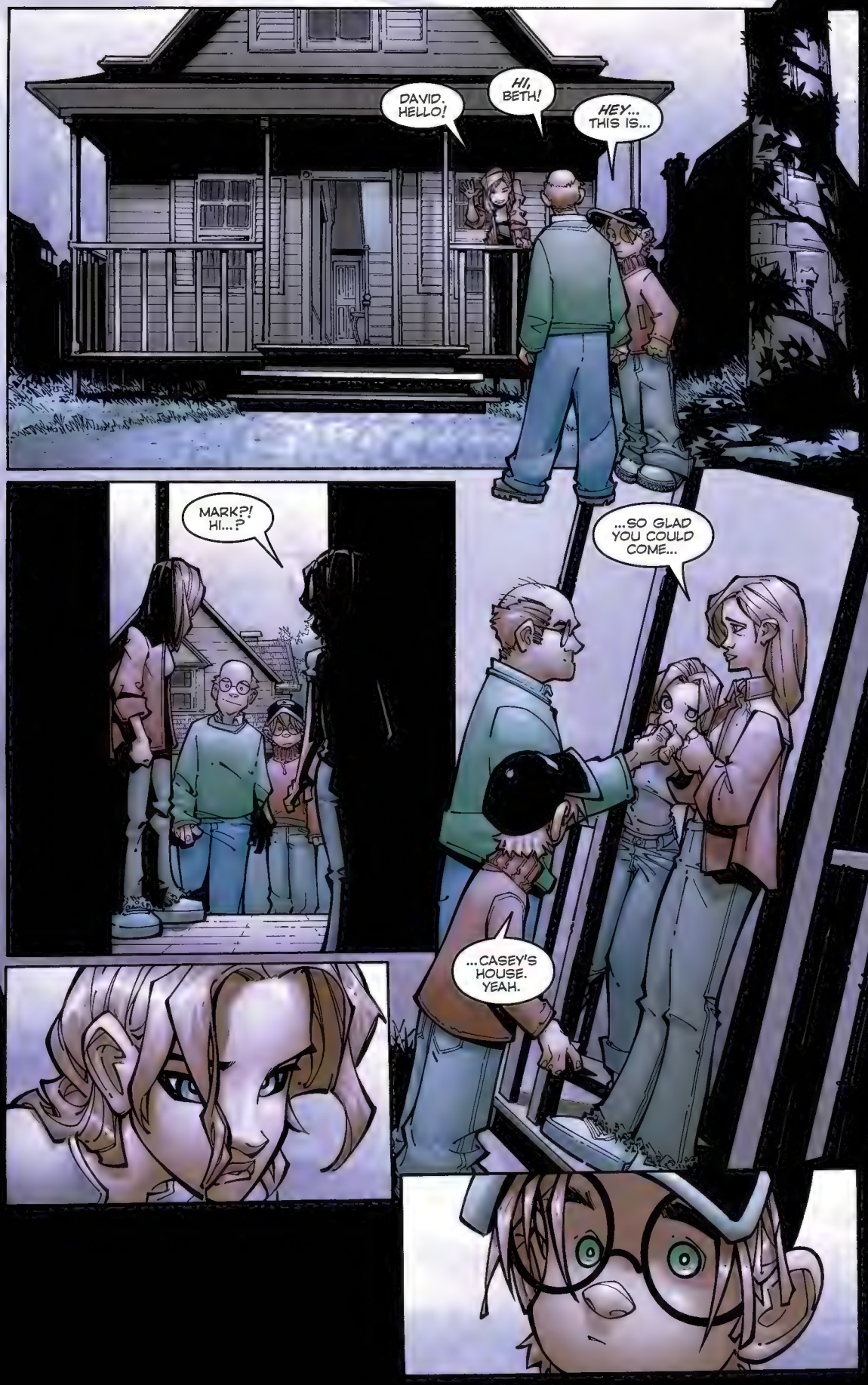
ABEL!
CLARK!
UP!
NOW!
BECKY GOT UP AND WALKED OFF!
I'M AFRAID SHE MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION. MAYBE SHE'S NOT IN HER RIGHT HEAD...?
THEN WE HAD BETTER SEARCH FOR HER! LIKE, NOW!
GRANDMA--?

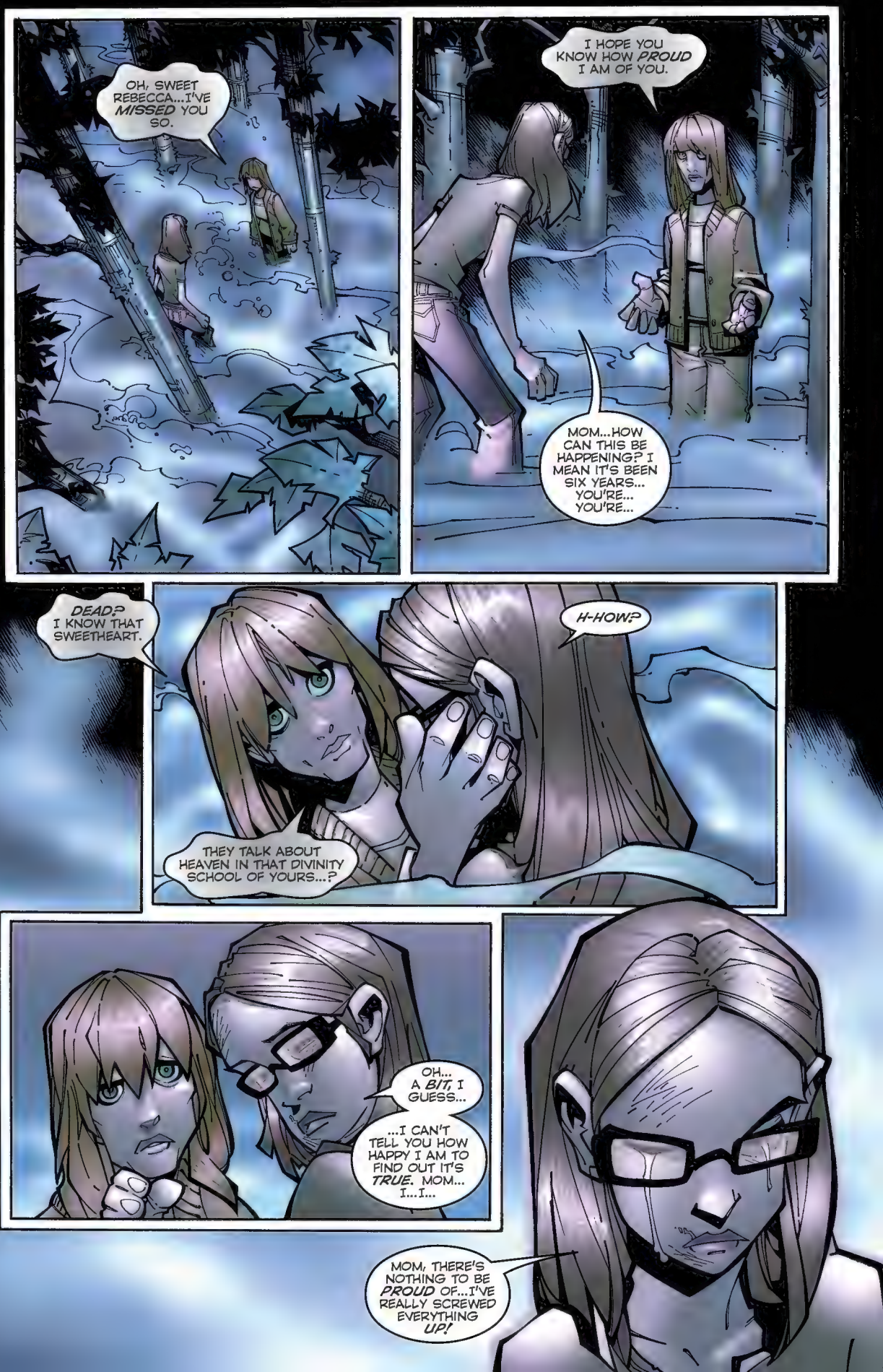
NO, NO--I'D ONLY *LOSE* YOU TWO FELLAS IN THAT SOUPY MESS OUT THERE.
BESIDES...I THINK THE PASTOR IS *FINE*.
BETTER THAN THIS OLD LADY...THAT IS A FACT.
COME ON... THERE'S NOTHING *WE* CAN DO FOR HER RIGHT NOW...
...BUT SHE IS IN *GOOD HANDS*.

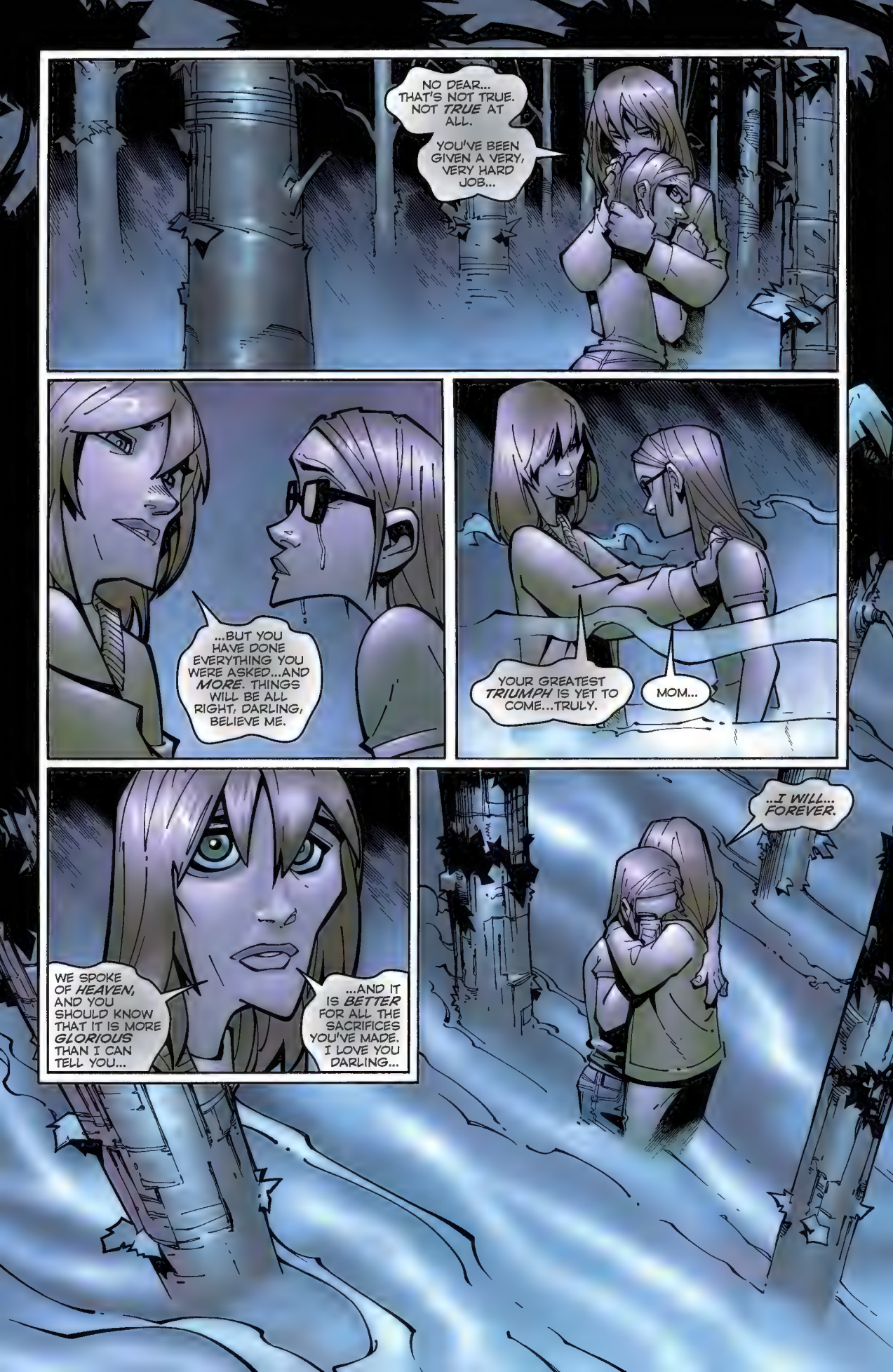

WHERE...?
HELLO--?!
YES...COME THIS WAY...
WHERE AM I? IS ANYONE HERE?
I'M RIGHT HERE.
...?!
MOM?!

...AND IN THE DREAM, SHE WAS WALKING THROUGH THE TOWN LOOKING FOR US...
...I'M SORRY, MARK, WHO WAS THIS NOW...IN THE DREAM--?
MOM... IT WAS MOM... AND SHE WAS LOOKING FOR US IN EL DORADO...
...WEIRD... WHAT DOES THIS TASTE LIKE?
TRY IT.
SO... WHAT'S IT LIKE?
CHICKEN.
SERIOUSLY.
SO, YOUR MOM WAS IN E.D. CITY, LOOKING FOR US, EH?
SINCE SHE LEFT US, I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES I'VE HAD THAT DREAM...
I DON'T KNOW, DAD, I GET THE FEELING SHE ACTUALLY IS OUT THERE LOOKING FOR US.


WELL... WOULDN'T THAT BE... *INTERESTING?* BUT FORGIVE ME, I WILL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.
DAD...? THIS ISN'T THE WAY HOME...
OH, RIGHT...I'M SORRY I FORGOT TO TELL YOU...
...WE'RE GOING...UM... *VISITING.*
VISITING *WHO?*
IT'S *WHOM,* I THINK...
AND...WELL... WE'RE GOING TO SEE...A... A *FRIEND* OF MINE.
WHAT--?!
YOU HAVE A *FRIEND?!*
IT'S *THAT* HARD TO BELIEVE, IS IT? LET'S GO, FUNNYMAN.

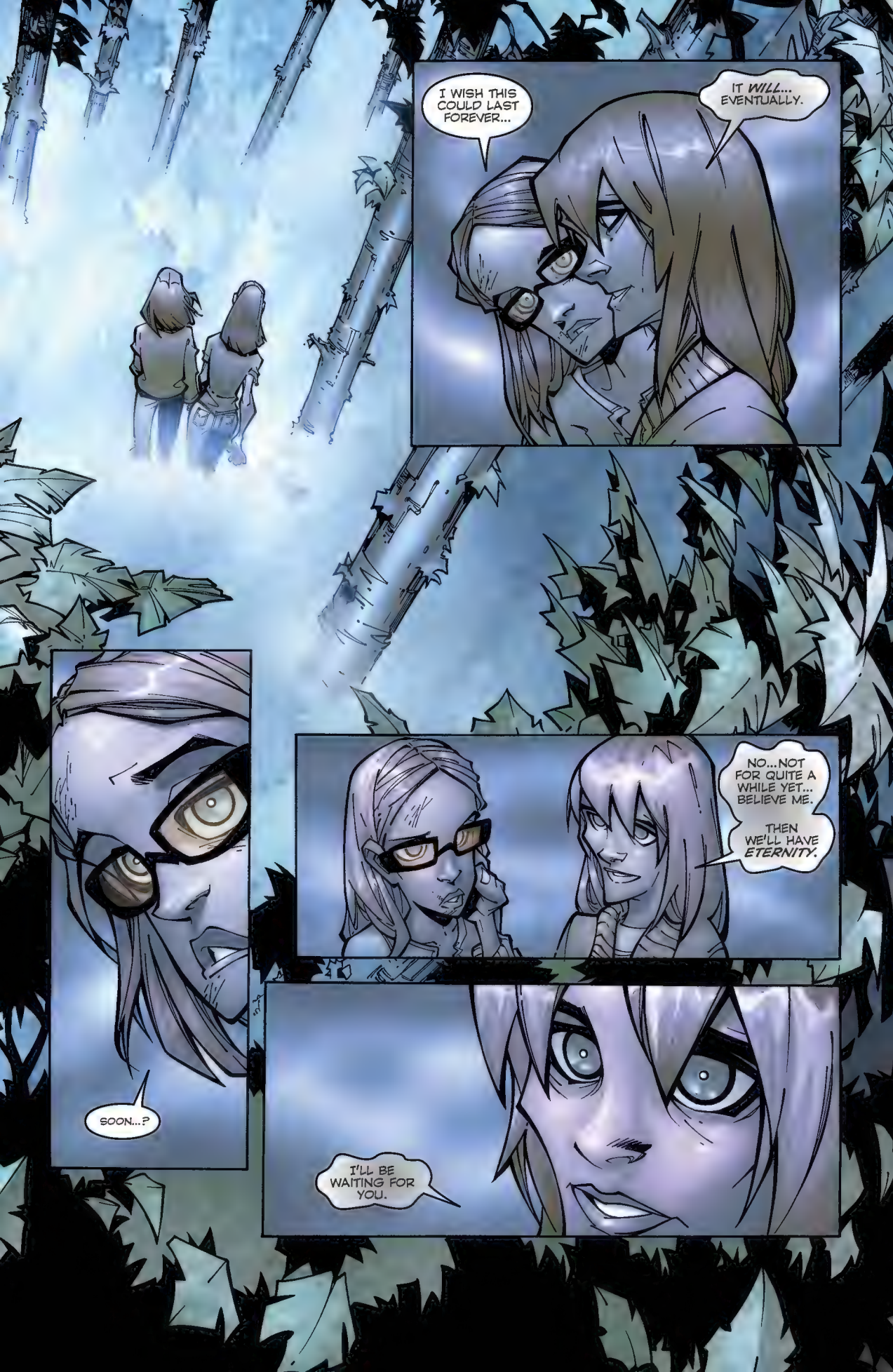

DAVID. HELLO!
HI, BETH!
HEY... THIS IS...
MARK?! HI...?
...SO GLAD YOU COULD COME...
...CASEY'S HOUSE. YEAH.


OH, SWEET REBECCA...I'VE *MISSED* YOU SO.
I HOPE YOU KNOW HOW *PROUD* I AM OF YOU.
MOM...HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING? I MEAN IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS... YOU'RE... YOU'RE...
DEAD? I KNOW THAT SWEETHEART.
H-HOW?
THEY TALK ABOUT HEAVEN IN THAT DIVINITY SCHOOL OF YOURS...?
OH... A *BIT,* I GUESS...
...I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW HAPPY I AM TO FIND OUT IT'S *TRUE.* MOM... I...I...
MOM, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE *PROUD* OF...I'VE REALLY SCREWED EVERYTHING *UP!*

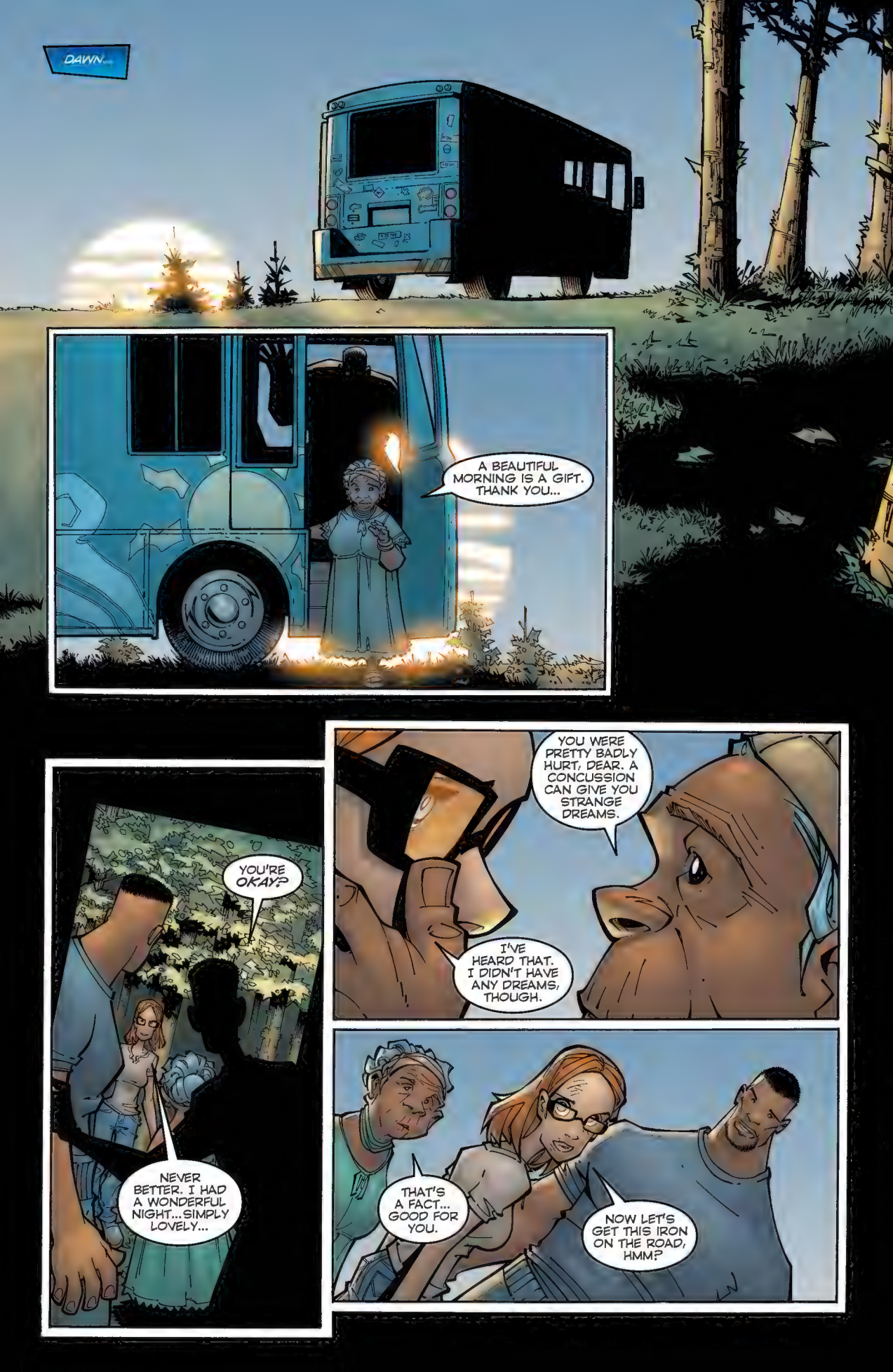

NO DEAR... THAT'S NOT TRUE. NOT *TRUE* AT ALL.
YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN A VERY, VERY HARD JOB...
...BUT YOU HAVE DONE EVERYTHING YOU WERE ASKED...AND *MORE*. THINGS WILL BE ALL RIGHT, DARLING, BELIEVE ME.
YOUR GREATEST *TRIUMPH* IS YET TO COME...TRULY.
MOM...
WE SPOKE OF *HEAVEN*, AND YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT IT IS MORE *GLORIOUS* THAN I CAN TELL YOU...
...AND IT IS *BETTER* FOR ALL THE SACRIFICES YOU'VE MADE. I LOVE YOU DARLING...
...I WILL... *FOREVER.*

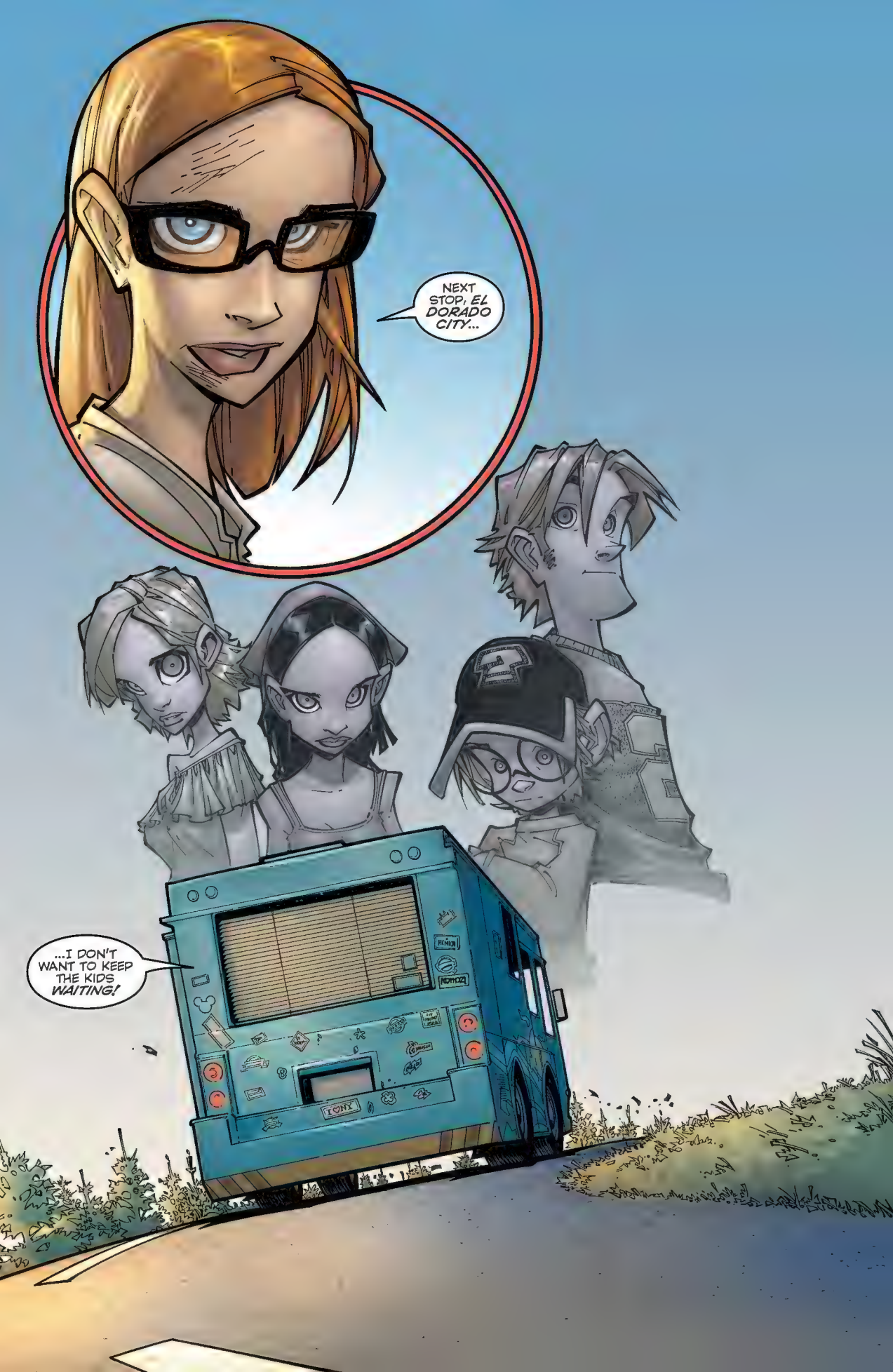
...I SWEAR THEY ALMOST SEEM GLAD ALL THIS WAKAPALOOZA HAPPENED. I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH... TOGETHERNESS...
THIS WATER DEAL, THOUGH... THAT IS JUST TOO WEIRD.
IT'S WEIRD, ZACH--IT'S LIKE EVERYTHING IS BECOMING THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE ALWAYS BEEN.
OH...AND YOU INCLUDE THE GREAT ROMANCE IN THIS IDEAL?
GREAT ROMANCE?
MY MOM. HIS DAD. THEY'VE BEGUN... DATING.
WEIRD, HUH?
I THINK IT'S SWEET. EVEN IN THE HELLHOLE, LOVE IS IN BLOOM!
I'M NOT SURE WHAT, BUT THAT'S GOT TO SAY SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT THE HUMAN SPIRIT.
CUT IT OUT, JESS!
AND HAT-BOY HERE IS A BIT CONFLICTED ABOUT IT-- RIGHT?
I'M A BIT CONFLICTED. MARK IS IN NUCLEAR DENIAL.
IT'S JUST THAT MOM IS LOOKING FOR US... SHE'S GOING TO COME BACK TO US...

OF COURSE IF WE *NEVER* GET BACK...
WE'RE GOING HOME.
SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY IS THE *MAGIC TALISMAN*-- THE INTERDIMENSIONAL *KEY*--WHICH WILL GET US BACK TO *EARTH!*
WE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON *FINDING* IT!
THEN WE CAN START MAKING NEW FRIENDS...


I WISH THIS COULD LAST FOREVER...
IT *WILL*... EVENTUALLY.
NO...NOT FOR QUITE A WHILE YET... BELIEVE ME.
THEN WE'LL HAVE *ETERNITY*.
SOON...?
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.

I LOVE YOU, MOM.
GO BACK NOW, SWEETHEART... YOU HAVE WORK TO DO...


DAWN...
A BEAUTIFUL MORNING IS A GIFT. THANK YOU...
YOU'RE OKAY?
NEVER BETTER. I HAD A WONDERFUL NIGHT... SIMPLY LOVELY...
YOU WERE PRETTY BADLY HURT, DEAR. A CONCUSSION CAN GIVE YOU STRANGE DREAMS.
I'VE HEARD THAT. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY DREAMS, THOUGH.
THAT'S A FACT... GOOD FOR YOU.
NOW LET'S GET THIS IRON ON THE ROAD, HMM?


NEXT STOP, EL DORADO CITY...
...I DON'T WANT TO KEEP THE KIDS WAITING!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

TURNINGS

EL DORADO CITY, CALIFORNIA, WAS SOLD LOCK, STOCK AND SEVERAL THOUSAND SOULS TO AN EXTRADIMENSTIONAL DESPOT. SUCCESS AND SAFETY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE FRUIT OF THAT SALE.
INSTEAD, THE TOWN HAS BEEN LITERALLY REPLANTED IN THE TOTALLY ALIEN SOIL OF ANOTHER WORLD!
THIS WHOLESALE BETRAYAL COULD NOT HAVE TRANSPIRED WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF MANY GOOD, WELL-INTENTIONED CITIZENS, INCLUDING THE REVEREND AMOS KEELER.
IN HIS OWN JUDGMENT, REV. KEELER HAS COMMITTED THE GRAVEST OF SINS--CONVINCING HIS FLOCK THAT THIS UNHOLY TRANSACTION HAD BEEN HEAVEN-SENT.
NOW, IN A SELF-IMPOSED HERMITAGE, KEELER KEEPS VIGIL OVER HIS MISPLACED METROPOLIS.
LOOK OUT!

IN ALL THE TIME THEY'VE BEEN UNWILLING GUESTS IN THIS BIZARRE LANDSCAPE THE PEOPLE OF EL DORADO CITY HAVE PULLED TOGETHER AND MADE THE BEST OF A HORRIFIC SITUATION

BUT HELL KNOWS NO COMPLACENCY--THINGS WILL ALWAYS GET WORSE

KRRSSH

WHUDD

SPLATT

KRSSH

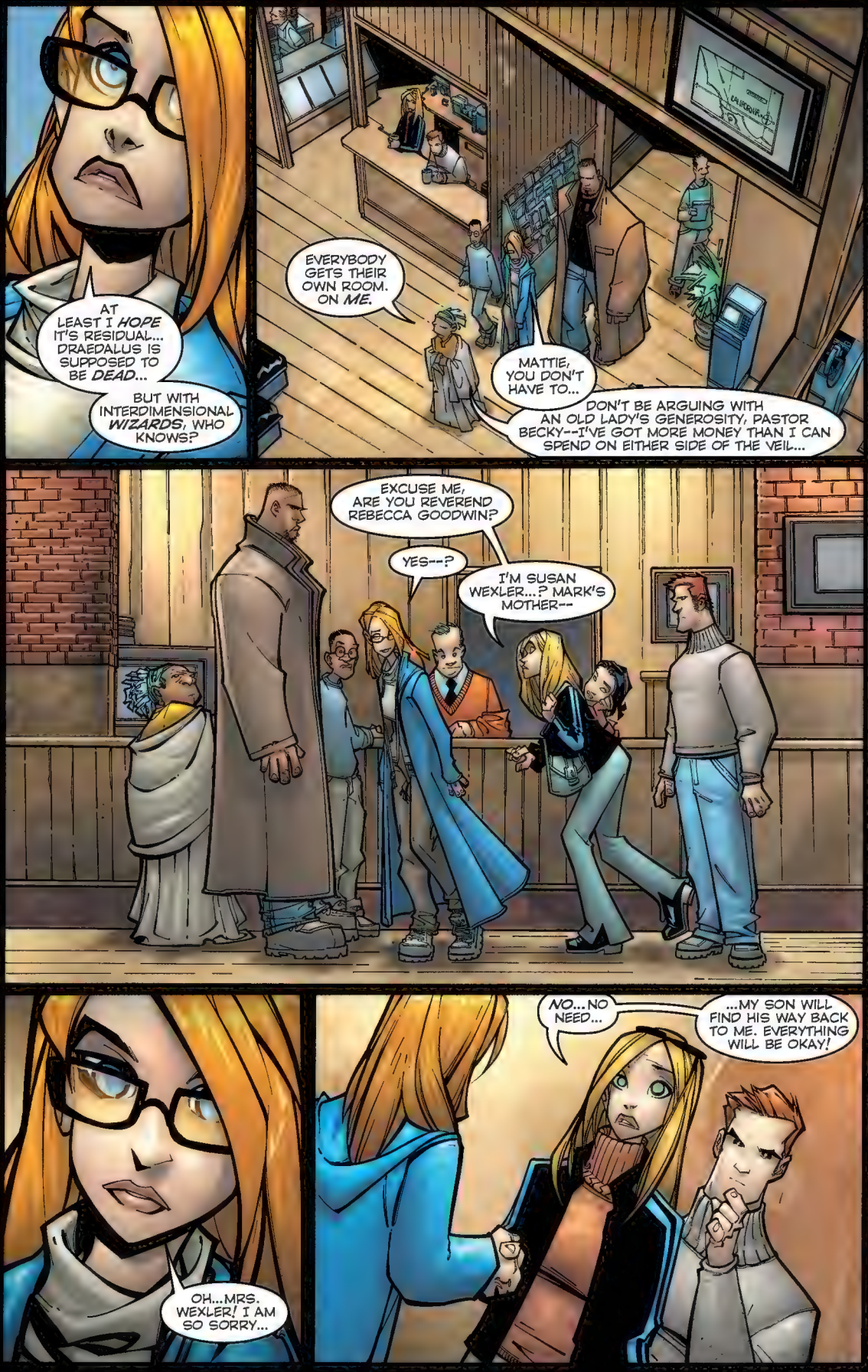
GOOD LORD!!

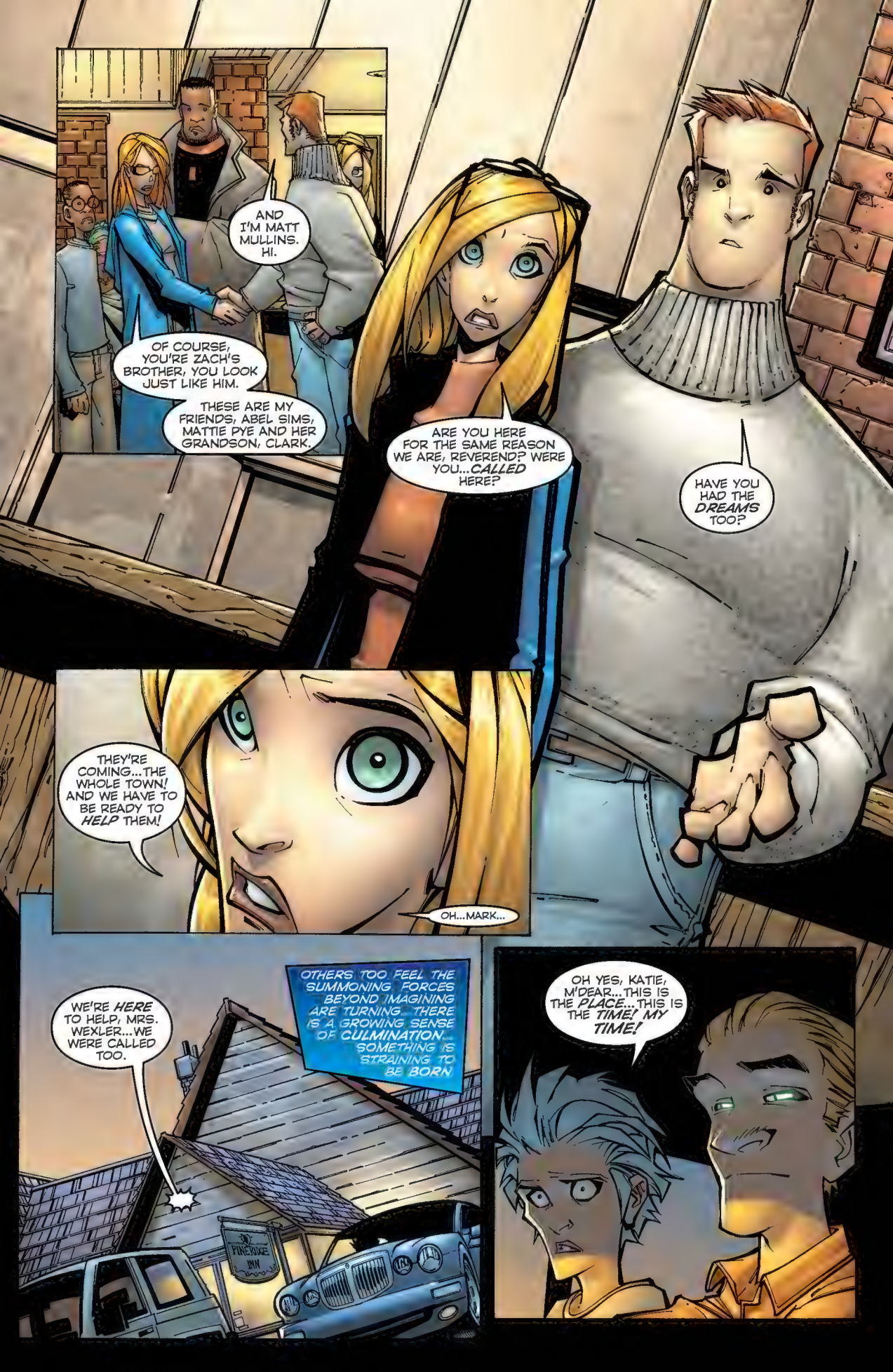
THUD

MY GOD, WHAT CAN THIS MEAN?
I KNOW, DOC...BUT THAT MAY NEVER HAPPEN...
ESPECIALLY TO OUR CONTINUING *SAFETY*. THOSE THINGS *DEFENDED* US AGAINST THE OTHER HORRORS.
IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME, DAVID. WE'RE LOST ON *DEMON-HAUNTED WORLD!* OUR ONLY HOPE IS ESCAPE...
WE'RE *NOT* GIVING UP--THIS IS JUST ONE MORE CRAZY OBSTACLE.
WE'RE GOING *HOME*, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO FIGHT A *WAR* TO GET THERE!
IT JUST MIGHT BE A WAR WE'RE FACING, BILL. THESE DEAD FLYERS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING...
THERE ARE LOTS MORE...*THINGS* OUT THERE--AND WE ARE JUST PLUMB OUT OF *FRIENDS!*

WE HAVE TO GET READY--THEY COULD ATTACK AT ANY MOMENT!
CITY HALL
WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT BACK! WE'RE GOING TO BEAT THIS!!
LET'S GO!!
STAYING BUSY SEEMS TO BE WHAT OUR PARENTS DO TO KEEP THE HELLHOUNDS AT BAY...
...GOD BLESS THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC.
WE HAVE TO HELP...
SOMEWHERE IN THIS TOWN IS A TALISMAN OF GREAT POWER--THE KEY TO THE MULTIVERSE!
THAT'S THE PRIZE DRAEDALUS STARTED THIS WHOLE MESS OVER... WE HAVE TO FIND IT!
WE HAVE TO.

THIS IS AS CLOSE AS WE CAN GET TO EL DORADO... UNLESS WE WANT TO SLEEP IN THE WOODS...
THESE OLD BONES EVER LIE DOWN IN THE WOODS, THEY WON'T GET *UP* AGAIN, PASTOR BECKY...
DON'T WORRY, MATTIE, THIS PLACE HAS BEDS.
I'VE BEEN GETTING THAT FOR A WHILE NOW, TOO.
DRAEDALUS LEFT HIS PSYCHIC PAW PRINTS ALL OVER THIS AREA...WE'RE PICKING UP RESIDUAL VIBRATIONS...
AMEN.


AT LEAST I *HOPE* IT'S RESIDUAL... DRAEDALUS IS SUPPOSED TO BE *DEAD*...
BUT WITH INTERDIMENSIONAL *WIZARDS*, WHO KNOWS?
EVERYBODY GETS THEIR OWN ROOM. ON *ME*.
MATTIE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
DON'T BE ARGUING WITH AN OLD LADY'S GENEROSITY, PASTOR BECKY--I'VE GOT MORE MONEY THAN I CAN SPEND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE VEIL...
EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU REVEREND REBECCA GOODWIN?
YES--?
I'M SUSAN WEXLER...? MARK'S MOTHER--
OH...MRS. WEXLER! I AM SO SORRY...
NO...NO NEED...
...MY SON WILL FIND HIS WAY BACK TO ME. EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY!


AND I'M MATT MULLINS. HI.
OF COURSE, YOU'RE ZACH'S BROTHER, YOU LOOK JUST LIKE HIM.
THESE ARE MY FRIENDS, ABEL SIMS, MATTIE PYE AND HER GRANDSON, CLARK.
ARE YOU HERE FOR THE SAME REASON WE ARE, REVEREND? WERE YOU...CALLED HERE?
HAVE YOU HAD THE DREAMS TOO?
THEY'RE COMING...THE WHOLE TOWN! AND WE HAVE TO BE READY TO HELP THEM!
OH...MARK...
OTHERS TOO FEEL THE SUMMONING FORCES BEYOND IMAGINING ARE TURNING. THERE IS A GROWING SENSE OF CULMINATION... SOMETHING IS STRAINING TO BE BORN
WE'RE HERE TO HELP, MRS. WEXLER...WE WERE CALLED TOO.
PINERIDGE INN
OH YES, KATIE, M'DEAR...THIS IS THE PLACE...THIS IS THE TIME! MY TIME!

"THE KEY TO EVERY REALM WILL BE MINE!"
WHAT'S...THAT...?
A...SOUND...? WHAT IS IT?
RRRRRMMBBBLL...
YAAAAHHH!

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT HELL BREAKING LOOSE ALL THE TIME. THEY HAVE NO IDEA.

EL DORADO CITY KNOWS.

THEY HAVE THE FRANCHISE.

SKRUUUSCH

SKRAAASSSHHH

Aiiiiiiiiiiiii!

SKRIIISSSH

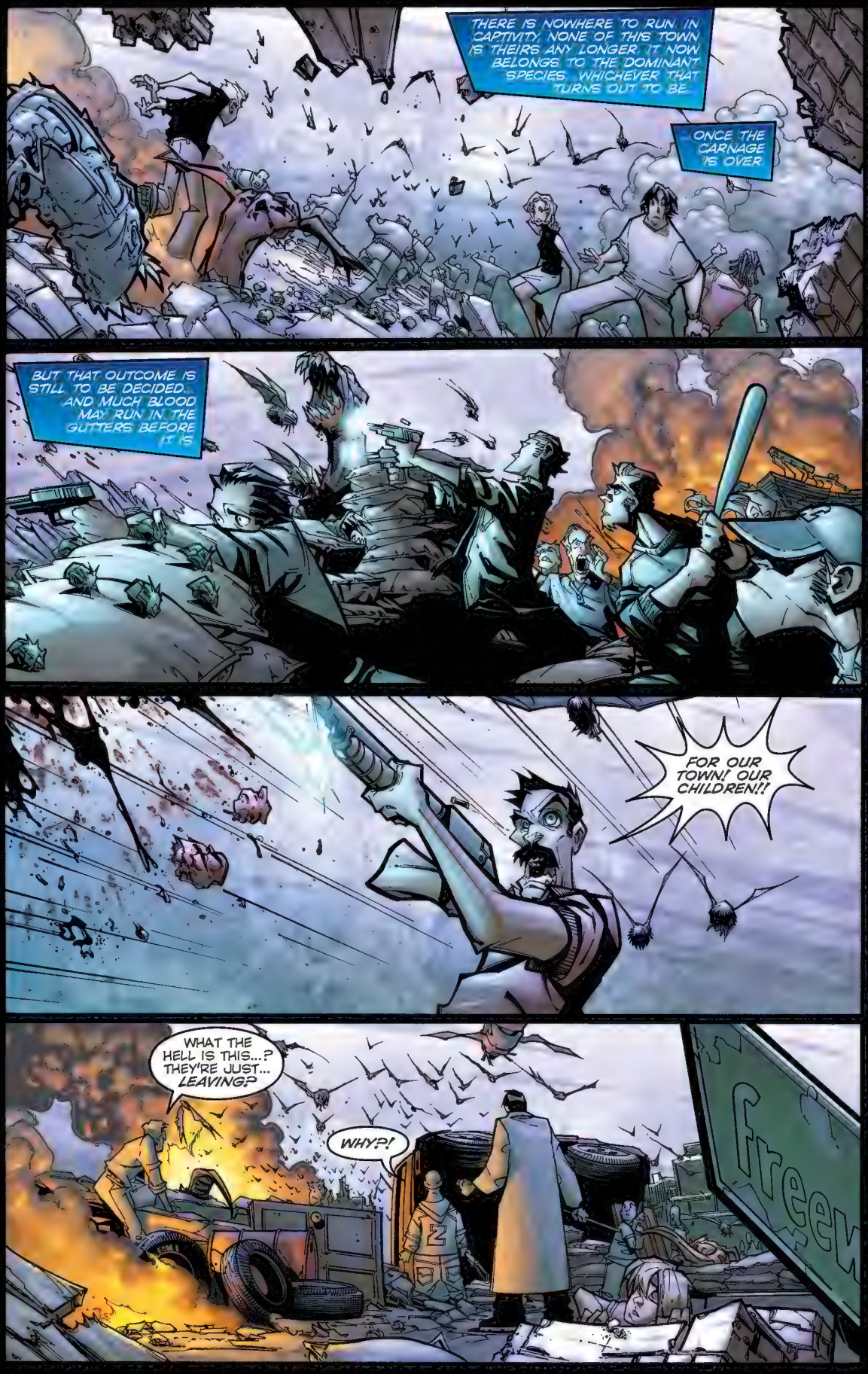
THE TOWNSFOLK LASH OUT WITH THE FERVOR OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS... FOR SUCH THEY ARE.
THEIR DEDICATION IS HEIGHTENED BY THE BITTER AWARENESS THAT THEY ALMOST SOLD THIS LIBERTY... ALMOST BARTERED THEIR SOULS
AARRRRKKKK--!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
HMMMM--
HMMMM--
YAAAHHH!
IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A LONG NIGHT. EL DORADO CITY MAY NOT SEE THE DAWN.

BEN'S
HOUSE
NOTHING STOPS THEM!
AND THIS IS JUST THE ADVANCE GUARD...!
NO! WE HAVE TO FIND THE TALISMAN! NOW!
HOW, MARK? MARK?
AH, BLIND-MAN'S BLUFF. LEAD ON, McMUFFIN...
FOLLOW THAT GEEK...
WHAT IS HE DOING?
HE KNOWS STUFF WHEN HE NEEDS TO KNOW IT...

WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR *THINGS* THAT MIGHT BE THIS TALISMAN. WE'VE BEEN MISSING THE POINT.
IT'S NOT A CLOCK, OR A FOOTBALL TROPHY, OR A MONUMENT... WHATEVER IT IS IT'S AT THE *HEART* OF WHAT EL DORADO CITY IS.
I THINK *THAT'S* WHAT DREW DRAEDALUS TO US IN THE FIRST PLACE, THOUGH I DOUBT EVEN HE UNDERSTOOD THE FULL TRUTH...
HE WANTED ACCESS TO EARTH AND EL DORADO CITY PROVIDED *THAT.* HE SOUGHT TO CLAIM A *COSMIC* PRIZE HIDDEN IN THIS REALITY.
DRAEDALUS NEVER SUSPECTED IT, BUT EL DORADO *WAS* THAT PRIZE. *IRONIC,* HMM?
WE'RE *HERE.*

Rest

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
KEEP FIRING! WE HAVE TO KEEP THEM BACK!
KEEPING THIS ONSLAUGHT IN CHECK WOULD BE LIKE HOLDING BACK THE TIDE. THIS, TOO IS NATURE SEEKING ITS LEVEL— NEVER CARING WHO GETS SWEPT AWAY
SKLEEEESSH
THIS LAND, BLIGHTED AS IT IS WITH ALIEN ARCHITECTURE AND SOFT LIFE FORMS IS WRONG. THESE THINGS DO NOT BELONG HERE—NATURE ALWAYS ASSERTS ITS PREFERENCE


THERE IS NOWHERE TO RUN. IN CAPTIVITY, NONE OF THIS TOWN IS THEIRS ANY LONGER. IT NOW BELONGS TO THE DOMINANT SPECIES. WHICHEVER THAT TURNS OUT TO BE.
ONCE THE CARNAGE IS OVER
BUT THAT OUTCOME IS STILL TO BE DECIDED. AND MUCH BLOOD MAY RUN IN THE GUTTERS BEFORE IT IS
FOR OUR TOWN! OUR CHILDREN!!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS...? THEY'RE JUST... LEAVING?
WHY?!
Freew

MAYBE A BIGGER DOG IS COMING...
BUT WHAT IS BIGGER...?
...OH...CRAP!
THE HOBGOBLINS.
FAR MORE DEADLY THAN NATURE IN ITS COURSE, IS AN ENEMY WHO THINKS...AND HATES.

ON THIS, THE SIDE OF THE TOWN CHARTER OAK, WE THE CITIZENS OF EL DORADO CITY COMMEMORATE THE FOUNDING OF OUR TOWN ON MAY 21, 1853. THIS MONUMENT DEDICATED ON THE TOWN'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, MAY 21, 1953

YES. THE *HEART* OF OUR TOWN.

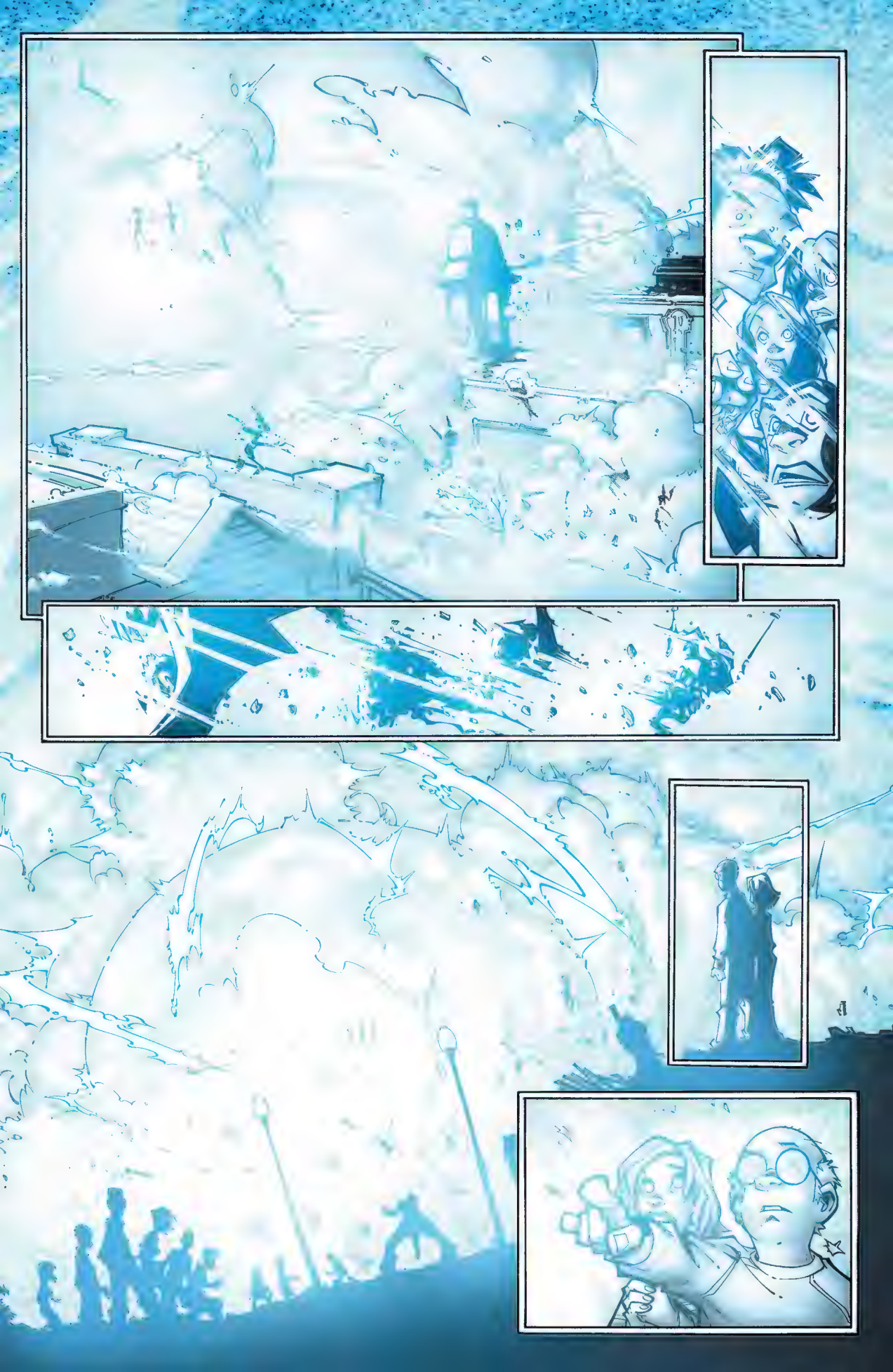
WE'VE FOUND IT!

UNNN--!

UNNN--!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SILENT MIRACLES



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FULL CIRCLE

HIS NAME IS DRAEDALUS. IN SEARCH OF COSMIC SUPREMACY AND A VASTLY POWERFUL PRIZE HE ATTEMPTED TO COME TO EARTH.
WHEN HIS PLAN FAILED, HIS DARK MAGIC DREW A SMALL TOWN BACK TO HIS EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL HELL WITH HIM.
EL DORADO CITY HAD MADE A ROTTEN DEAL WITH THE EVIL SORCERER AND NOW PAID A PRICE FOR THAT MISTAKE. TRAPPED IN THE DRAEDREALM, THEY FEARED ETERNAL EXILE AS PUNISHMENT.
FOUR TEENS WOULD NOT REST UNTIL THEIR TOWN WAS RESTORED...
...AND THEY DID FIND THEIR WAY--THROUGH DRAEDALUS' POWER ITSELF.
BUT HAVING FOUND THEIR WAY HOME, THE YOUNGSTERS FOUND THEMSELVES TRAPPED AS WELL.
DRAEDALUS' PRIZE WAS A TALISMAN OF UNKNOWABLE COSMIC POWER--A VERITABLE KEY TO UNLOCK THE MULTIVERSE. IRONICALLY, THE TALISMAN WAS HIDDEN IN EL DORADO--AND HAD BEEN TRANSPORTED WITH IT.
ULTIMATELY THE TALISMAN WAS FOUND BY THE TEENS--AS WAS FATED--AND WITH IT THEY MADE THINGS RIGHT.

THE MECHANISM OF THE COSMOS WAS REVERSED. EL DORADO CITY WAS MYSTICALLY RETURNED TO ITS EARTHLY BERTH

THOUGH PRESUMED DEAD, DRAEDALUS HAD FOUND HIS WAY TO EARTH AS WELL. HE WAS WAITING.

FINALLY, I HAVE ARRIVED IN THE *FLESH!* NOW WILL I CLAIM MY PRIZE AND THE POWER TO RULE THE MULTI-VERSE! *NOW!!*

FORGET IT, APE-FACE! *WE'VE* GOT THE TALISMAN *AND* ITS POWER! IT WAS *INTENDED* FOR US-- TO *FIGHT* YOU!

WE'VE ALREADY BEATEN YOU TWICE, *WITHOUT* IT! NOW WE'VE EVEN *BANISHED* YOU FROM YOUR OWN *KINGDOM!*

GET THIS UGLY LOSER SOME *JAM*--HE'S TOAST!

BANISHED? HARDLY.
ALL I WISHED WAS ACCESS TO EARTH. YOU GAVE THAT TO ME. NOW GIVE ME MY TALISMAN!
"IT IS TRUE, MY ESSENCE WAS ACCIDENTALLY TRAPPED HERE ON EARTH--WITHOUT FORM AND SUBSTANCE, BUT THAT DID NOT LAST LONG.
"FORTUNATELY, ONE OF MY EARTHLY MINIONS WAS NEARBY, CAPTIVE OF AN INTER-DIMENSIONAL RIVAL. ILL-USED BY THE CREATURE, KATE WEBB WAS WIDE OPEN FOR POSSESSION..
"WITHIN HER, I BIDED MY TIME IN HIDING, RECUPERATING, GATHERING STRENGTH AND ACCLIMATING TO EARTH.
"WAITING FOR MY MOMENT TO RETURN.
"WAITING FOR MY IDIOT RIVAL TO DO SOMETHING STUPID...

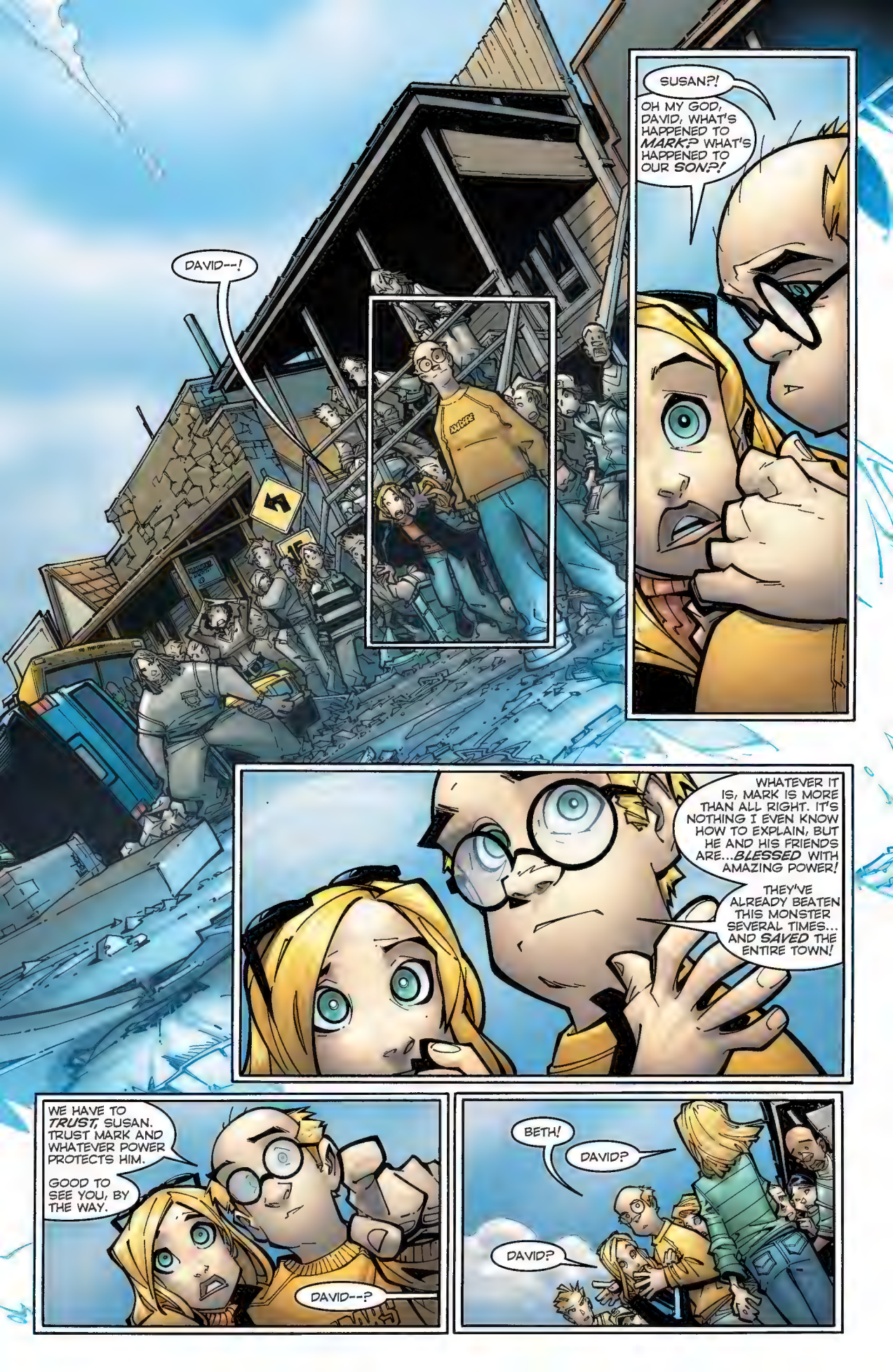
"AND THE FOOL COMPLIED GRANDLY--GETTING HIMSELF KILLED WITHOUT EVER GETTING CLOSE TO THE TALISMAN."
SAYS THE CREEP WHO HAD THE THING IN HIS OWN REALM AND NEVER KNEW IT!
COURSE, YOU WERE TOO BUSY ACTING LIKE A SCOOBY DOO VILLAIN TO NOTICE IT.
I WILL NOT BE MOCKED!!
BACK OFF. WE'RE NOT JUST KIDS ANYMORE...
...WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER--AND WE'VE LIVED THROUGH A LOT!

GET HIM!!

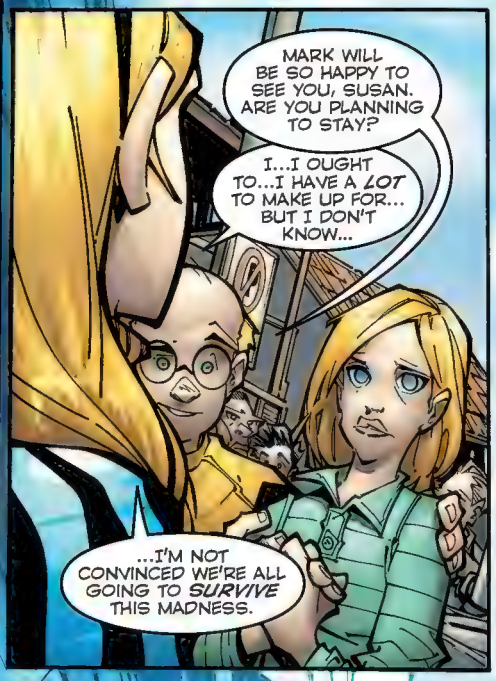
GET OFF!
AAAARRRGGH!
SHRAKKK

DO YOU WORMS THINK YOU CAN CHALLENGE MY SORCERY? YOU ARE MINE TO DISPOSE OF!
THIS PALTRY VILLAGE IS MINE! THIS WORLD IS MINE!
THE TALISMAN AND ALL ITS POWER IS MINE!!
ACTUALLY, IT'S OURS.
BUT YOU ARE GOING TO GET WHAT'S YOURS, BLUTO.

YAAAAAA...!!
KAWHAMM


DAVID--!
SUSAN?!
OH MY GOD, DAVID, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO *MARK*? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR *SON*?!
WHATEVER IT IS, MARK IS MORE THAN ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOTHING I EVEN KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN, BUT HE AND HIS FRIENDS ARE...*BLESSED* WITH AMAZING POWER!
THEY'VE ALREADY BEATEN THIS MONSTER SEVERAL TIMES... AND *SAVED* THE ENTIRE TOWN!
WE HAVE TO *TRUST*, SUSAN. TRUST MARK AND WHATEVER POWER PROTECTS HIM.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, BY THE WAY.
DAVID--?
BETH!
DAVID?
DAVID?

BETH, THIS IS MY EX-WIFE, SUSAN WEXLER.
SUSAN, THIS IS MY... FRIEND, BETH PHILLIPS.
HI.
AH...HELLO.


MARK WILL BE SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU, SUSAN. ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAY?
I...I OUGHT TO...I HAVE A LOT TO MAKE UP FOR... BUT I DON'T KNOW...
...I'M NOT CONVINCED WE'RE ALL GOING TO SURVIVE THIS MADNESS.

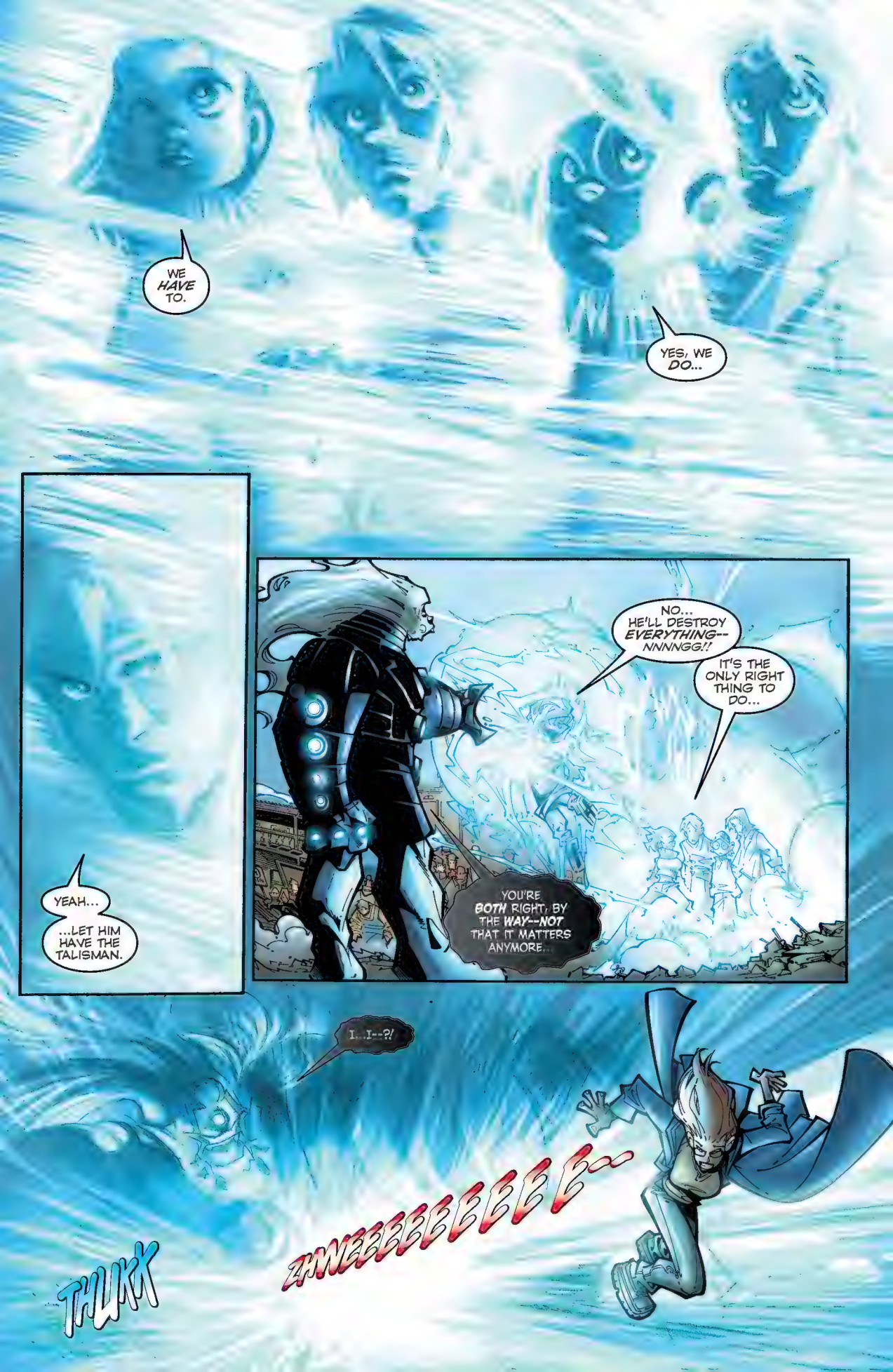
EVEN WITH THE TALISMAN, I AM YOUR MASTER! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO USE THAT VAST POWER!

SHWAAAAM

GEEZ, COULD YOU SOUND MORE LIKE DARTH VADER?!

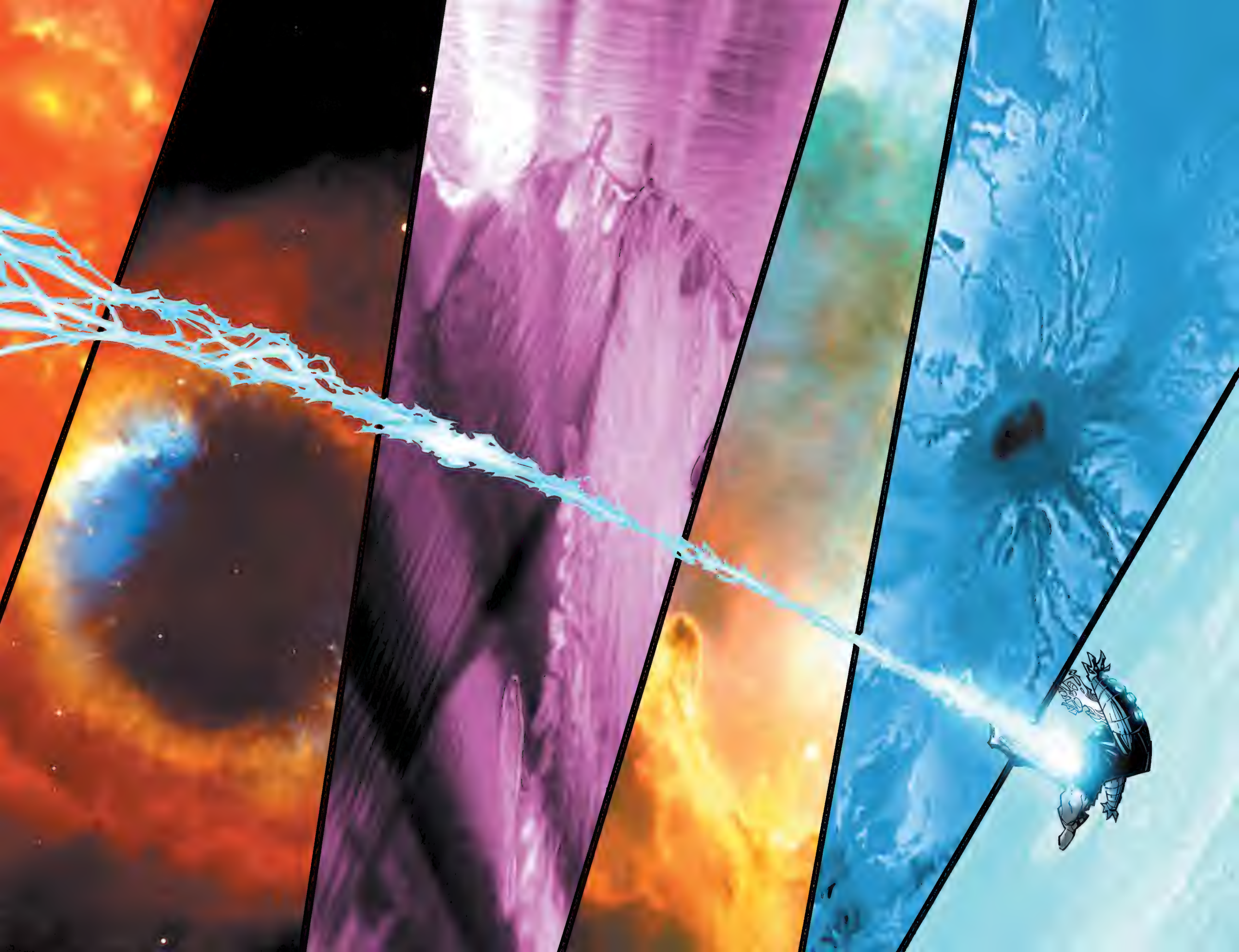
KRRRCCCH
SPWAMMM
ZZAKKKKK
YAAAAAAYY!
KRRRCCCH

KILL HIM!
NO! WE'RE BETTER THAN DRAEDALUS!
MARK, CASEY, ZACH, JESS--STOP!
KILLING EVEN HIM WOULD BE AN ABUSE OF THE GREAT POWER YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN!
URRRK--?!
NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED, REVEREND GOODWIN. YOUR WEAKNESS IS MY OPPORTUNITY!
I PROPOSE A TRADE. MY TALISMAN IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR BELOVED BECKY!
NOW!
NO-- DON'T!!


WE HAVE TO.
YES, WE DO...
NO... HE'LL DESTROY EVERYTHING-- NNNNGG!!
IT'S THE ONLY RIGHT THING TO DO...
YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT, BY THE WAY--NOT THAT IT MATTERS ANYMORE...
YEAH...
...LET HIM HAVE THE TALISMAN.
I...I--?!
ZHWEEEEEEEEE--
THUKK

NO...NO... NOT LIKE THIS!
NOT LIKE THIS!!
YOU WANTED THE TALISMAN...
YOU WANTED TOTAL ACCESS TO THE MULTIVERSE...
...WELL, YOU'VE GOT IT.
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.
NO-O-O-O-O-O!!!
POP
YAAAAAAAYYYY!!!
SCHWWiiiiiiRRR--

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!



YOU KIDS *DID* IT--YOU *BEAT* DRAEDALUS AGAIN!

FOR *GOOD* THIS TIME!

YOU'VE GIVEN US OUR LIVES, OUR TOWN AND OUR *FAMILIES* BACK... THANK GOD!

YOU *SAVED* US ALL, KIDS...

...FROM DRAEDALUS AND FROM OUR OWN *STUPIDITY!*

WE JUST DID WHAT WE *HAD* TO...

YEAH, WE WEREN'T GIVEN A LOT OF *CHOICE,* YOU KNOW...

WHAT BETTER DEFINITION OF HEROES? DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE WHEN THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE...

I LOVE YOU ALL.

WE *ALL* DO-- AND SPEAKING OF THE *IMPOSSIBLE,* WE'VE A CITY TO CLEAN UP!

BUT I GUESS WE CAN WAIT A LITTLE BIT ON THAT...

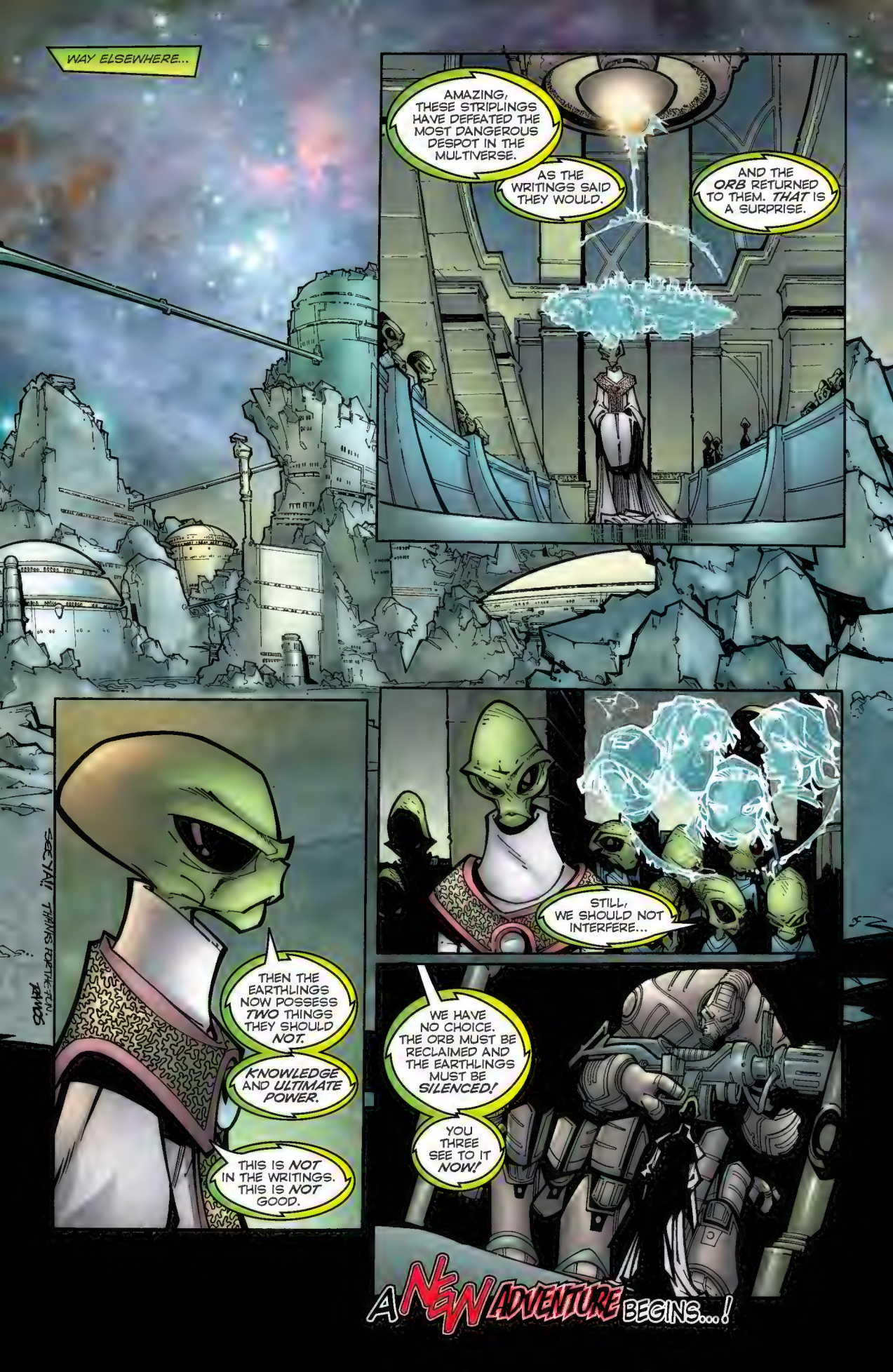
NICE WORK.

I WONDER IF THE *TALISMAN* IS GONE FOR GOOD.

IT'S *BACK?*

I GUESS THERE'S STILL WORK TO DO.

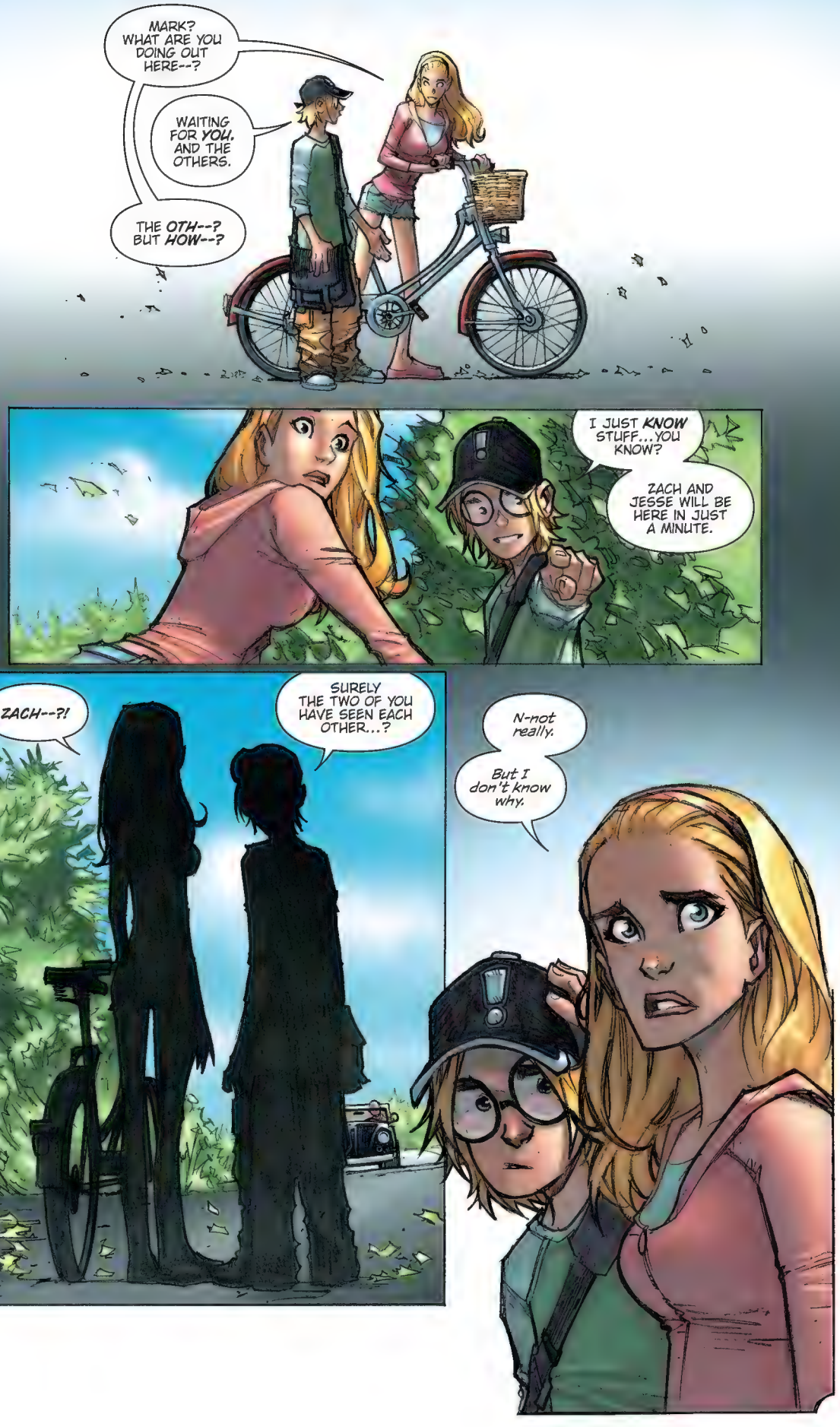
THERE!!


WAY ELSEWHERE...
AMAZING, THESE STRIPLINGS HAVE DEFEATED THE MOST DANGEROUS DESPOT IN THE MULTIVERSE.
AS THE WRITINGS SAID THEY WOULD.
AND THE ORB RETURNED TO THEM. THAT IS A SURPRISE.
STILL, WE SHOULD NOT INTERFERE...
SEE YA! THANKS FOR THE FUN, FANBOY.
THEN THE EARTHLINGS NOW POSSESS TWO THINGS THEY SHOULD NOT.
KNOWLEDGE AND ULTIMATE POWER.
THIS IS NOT IN THE WRITINGS. THIS IS NOT GOOD.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE. THE ORB MUST BE RECLAIMED AND THE EARTHLINGS MUST BE SILENCED!
YOU THREE SEE TO IT NOW!
A NEW ADVENTURE BEGINS...!

EPILOGUE

EL DORADO CITY, CALIFORNIA.
THREE MONTHS LATER...
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HE COULD HAVE HAD ANY CAR HE WANTED. HIS PARENTS HAD WANTED TO CELEBRATE EL DORADO'S SURVIVAL, AND HIS PART IN IT.
...BUT THAT HADN'T FELT RIGHT TO ZACH MULLINS, THOUGH HE WASN'T SURE WHY.
JESSE SANTIAGO WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC, IF THEY EVER TALKED ABOUT IT. BUT NO ONE EVER TALKED ABOUT IT.
WHAT THE TOWN WAS, IT WAS NO LONGER. THEY'D PROBABLY BE BETTER SOON, BUT THEY'D NEVER BE WHAT THEY WERE AGAIN.

NEVER BE THAT INNOCENT AGAIN. UNDERLYING EVERYONE'S RELIEF, WAS THE MELANCHOLY SADNESS OF THAT FACT
OF THEM ALL, PERHAPS NO ONE FELT THAT MORE ACUTELY THAN CASEY PHILLIPS.
PERHAPS SOON, THE TOWN WILL FACE THEIR FACTS. BUT TODAY IT WAS EASIER TO BE HAPPY FOR THE SUN, FOR THE BLUE SKY...
MARK WEXLER WOULD LOVE TO TALK THAT OVER WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS. IF HE COULD
BUT EVEN THEY WERE CAUGHT UP IN THE FUNK OR WHATEVER IT WAS
THAT FACT THEY WOULD FACE TODAY
TOGETHER

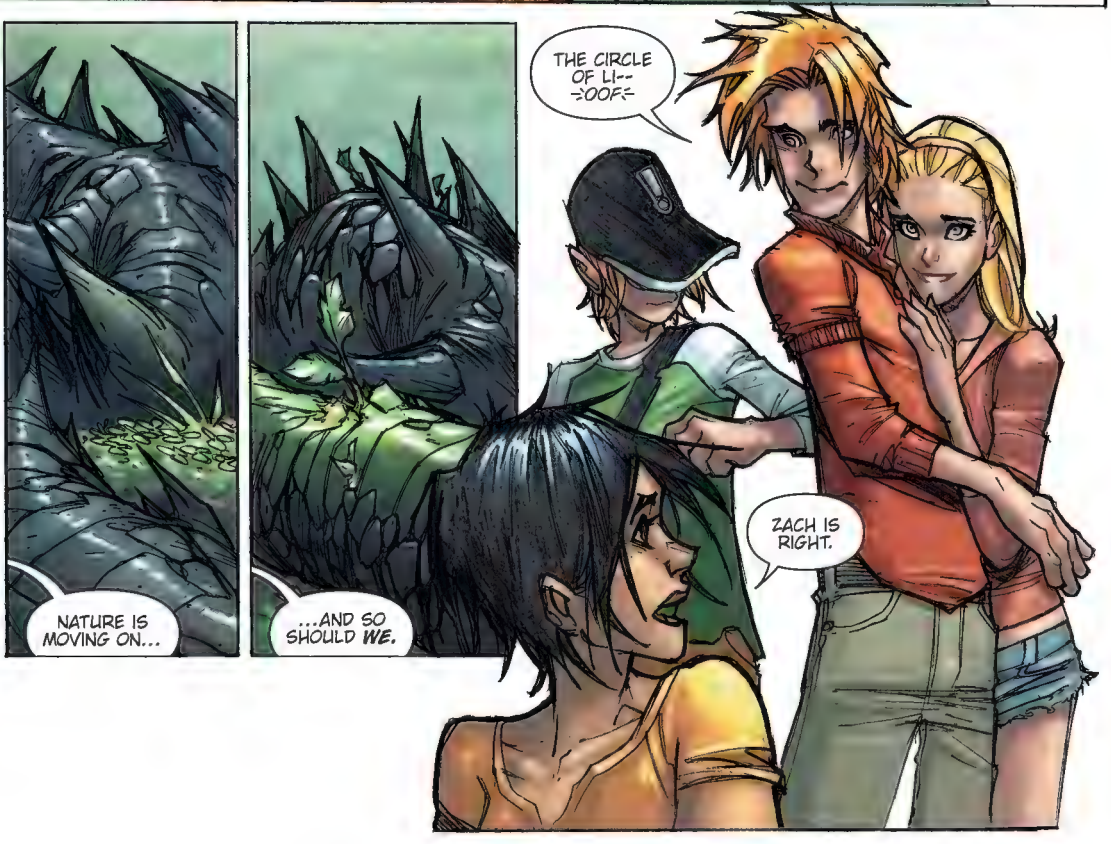

MARK? WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE--?
WAITING FOR YOU. AND THE OTHERS.
THE OTH--? BUT HOW--?
I JUST KNOW STUFF...YOU KNOW?
ZACH AND JESSE WILL BE HERE IN JUST A MINUTE.
ZACH--?!
SURELY THE TWO OF YOU HAVE SEEN EACH OTHER...?
N-not really.
But I don't know why.

CASEY!
GUYS!
IT'S LIKE I'M *WAKING* UP AFTER A LONG SLEEP!
YEAH, WHATEVER BECAME OF *US*?
AFTER EVERYTHING WE WENT THROUGH TOGETHER, IT SEEMS WEIRD THAT WE HARDLY EVER SEE EACH OTHER...
MAYBE SOME LEFTOVER *MAGIC*--?
ACTUALLY, I THINK IT'S KINDA THE *OPPOSITE*...
AFTER WHAT WE WENT THROUGH, IT'S NATURAL TO WANT TO GET AWAY FROM ALL OF THAT. SAME WITH THE TOWN...
...ALMOST AS IF BEING IN DENIAL ABOUT *DRAEDALUS* AND HIS PIXIES MEANS WE HAD TO DENY *EVERYTHING* ELSE OR FACE IT *ALL*.
MY DAD SAID IT'S LIKE SOLDIERS. THEY FIGHT SIDE-BY-SIDE, CLOSER THAN FAMILY, BUT NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN AFTER THE WAR IS OVER.
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH WORSE THAN A WAR...

I HOPE WE DON'T HAVE TO NEVER SEE EACH OTHER.
NO. WE WILL NEVER LOSE OUR CONNECTION!
EXACTLY. PLUS, I DON'T THINK FATE IS ANYWHERE CLOSE TO THROUGH WITH US.
I FOUND SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU...
SOMETHING WEIRD... EVEN BY OUR STANDARDS.
AND HOW DID YOU FIND THIS...WHATEVER IT IS--?
HE JUST KNOWS THINGS--!

HERE IT IS.
GOOD... GOD...!
WHAT IS THIS?
HORRIBLE.
THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT BEHIND OF DRAEDALUS' EVIL.

AND THIS IS HALF THE SIZE IT WAS WHEN I FOUND IT TWO WEEKS AGO.
IT'S SHRINKING--?
MORE LIKE BEING... RECLAIMED, I THINK...
LIFE IS... REASSERTING ITSELF. REJECTING DEATH AND DECAY.
LOOK CLOSELY--


NATURE IS MOVING ON...
...AND SO SHOULD WE.
THE CIRCLE OF LI--
-OOF-
ZACH IS RIGHT.

THERE'LL BE MORE WEIRDNESS OUT THERE...
BUT WE'LL DEAL WITH IT...
ALL OF US!
TOGETHER!
THE END

ISSUE THIRTEEN COVER
PENCILS BY **HUMBERTO RAMOS**
INKS BY **SANDRA HOPE**
COLORS BY **EDGAR DELGADO**

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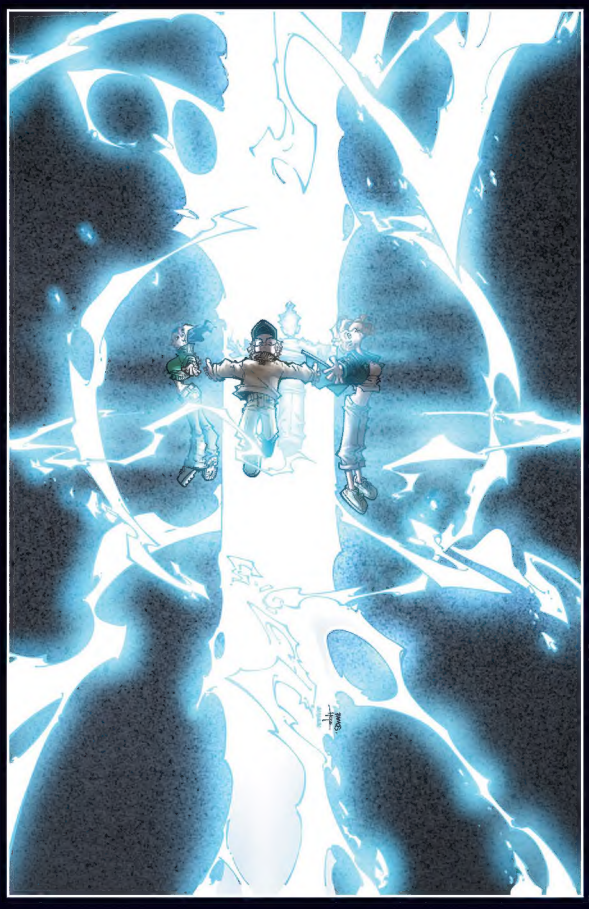

ISSUE EIGHTEEN COVER
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OUR HEROES FACE THEIR FINAL TEST.
FIGHT. TOGETHER.

The entire town of El Dorado City–bricks, boards, and human occupants–has been transported to the mystical wasteland of evil Draedalus's domain. With the minions of all realms running wild, our heroes must band together if they are to save their families and friends.

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